

THE IMPACT OF DIVINE/FAITH HEALING
ON THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY IN THE BAHAMAS

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BY
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To my wonderful, precious, loving, and amazing mother,

Eleanor Patricia Rolle-Mackey

(1935–2012)

My hero, my confidant, and my life-long role model

who taught me all of life's lessons,

and always reminded me, "God knows best."

(After eight years battling breast cancer, she died from related complications)

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

—James 5:14-15

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ABSTRACT

According to literature, in the early beginning of the Pentecostal movement, it was viewed by many as a movement for the poor and the uneducated. The fact is that being poor and uneducated was not an anomaly then for persons had no control over these circumstances. However, when people realized that they could be divinely healed, without having to pay for it, they became more attracted to the movement.

This study has examined the methods used in divine healing, types of divine healing, the role of faith and prayer in divine healing, healing by means of points of contact, medical intervention, and possible reasons why not all sick individuals are healed.

After reviewing the literature and examining the biblical and theological perspectives, using a questionnaire as the survey instrument, data were collected for this study. From all indications, it can therefore be concluded that divine healing is still taking place in the Bahamas, and even though there may not be as many testimonies of divine healing as in the earlier years, it is still greatly impacting the church.

It has been recommended, based on respondents' views, that pastors ensure that the matter of divine healing is taught, especially since it is one of the beliefs and teachings of the Church of God of Prophecy. Additionally, pastors need to encourage members to request prayers if they are ill and not be afraid to testify of their healing experiences.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Brief Historical and Geographical Overview

In order to understand the setting of this thesis-project, it is necessary to present a brief historical overview of the Church of God of Prophecy and a brief overview of the geographical setting of the Bahamas.

The Church of God of Prophecy

The Church of God of Prophecy is a Pentecostal movement with its headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee. In the early 1900s, a group of men in North Carolina were in search of more enlightenment and understanding of what it was that God wanted for His church at that time. Men such as W. F. Bryant, Richard Spurling Jr., and A. J. Tomlinson had banded together in prayer and in a search of Scripture to find answers to their questions. On June 13, 1903, after his early prayers on Burger Mountain, A. J. Tomlinson returned to the place where a meeting was to be held. After some discussion that assured him that “they took the whole Bible rightly divided as their only rule of faith and practice,”¹ Tomlinson responded, “well if you take the whole Bible rightly divided, that makes it the Church of God.”² With the Bible in his hand, and the

¹ Lillie Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson: Former General Overseer of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1964), 34.

² Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 35.

understanding that it was the Church of God, he then accepted the “covenant,”³ thus becoming a member of the last days Church of God.

Tomlinson was chosen as the leader and pastor of the church, and in 1910, he was selected General Overseer and continued as such until 1923, when a split resulted over some misunderstanding. Having taken just about everything with them, the group headed by F. J. Lee left, while Tomlinson, though destitute, courageously, with the help of God, continued to rebuild what remained of the church. After a long legal battle, the court ordered that the word *Prophecy* be added to the name Church of God to be used by Tomlinson’s group. It is important to note that for first twenty years (1903–1923) of ministry, these two groups, Church of God and Church of God of Prophecy, shared the same history under the name Church of God.

In 1995, under the leadership of Bishop Billy Murray, in a solemn assembly between these two organizations, that a plea was made for forgiveness and reconciliation. These were some of Murray’s closing words: “We admit our guilt of an institutional pride, which does not reflect the humility of this world’s only Savior: Please forgive us for any lack of true fellowship you may have felt.”⁴ In a conversation with Bishop Adrian L. Varlack, church historian, he revealed that there was no formal response from the Church of God. However, he noted that one of the executive assistants, upon seeing and hearing the emotional apology from one of the brethren of Church of God of Prophecy for all that he had preached against them over the years,

³ Covenant: “Will you take this [Bible] as the Word of God, believe and practice it, obey its precepts and walk in the light as God is in the light?”

⁴ Adrian L. Varlack, *Foundations: Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 179.

said, “None of our hands are clean, Brother!”⁵ There was no amalgamation of the two groups, but a cordial working relationship among them continues.

The Bahamas

In order to have an appreciation for the challenges of the area or the setting in which this thesis-project is focused, one has to understand, among other things, the geographical uniqueness of this island nation.

“The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is a group of some 700 islands and nearly 2,500 small islets or cays. Approximately 30 of these islands are inhabited. The Bahamas stretches southeast off the Florida coast. The closest Family Island to the U.S. mainland is Bimini, about 50 miles off the coast of South Florida.”⁶ With the exception of New Providence and Grand Bahama, all of the other inhabited islands are called Family Islands. “The other islands stretch across roughly 100,000 square miles of ocean, beginning at their northernmost point about 175 miles east of Palm Beach, Florida and winding nearly 750 miles to the southeast where they are within 50 miles off Cuba and Hispaniola (Haiti/Dominican Republic).”⁷

Of the thirty major inhabited islands, the church has a presence in seventeen of them. The means of transportation from one island to the other is by boat or plane. Traveling by plane, you can get from New Providence (the capital) to some of the

⁵ Adrian L. Varlack, historian of the Church of God of Prophecy, email conversation with the author, July 30, 2017.

⁶ JourneyMart, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://journeymart.com/de/bahamas/geographical-information>.

⁷ The Bahamas Guide, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://journeymart.com/de/bahamas/geographical-information>.

nearest islands in as little as fifteen minutes, while to travel to some of the other islands can take up to ninety minutes. When missionaries would have traversed these islands in the early 1900s, it would have been by sailboats, and therefore the length of time needed to complete a trip would have greatly depended on the wind.

Introduction

As a little girl growing up on one of the islands of the Bahamas, I would listen to testimonies of healing being told by my maternal great-grandfather, who was a devoted member of the Church of God of Prophecy and a strong believer in divine/faith healing, without medical assistance. His belief was, “if God was going to heal him, he did not need any help from the doctor”; a belief to which he held until his demise from natural causes, dying a very old man. I was able to experience some of these miraculous healings personally or by means of observation as I grew older.

After reading some of A. J. Tomlinson’s responses and reminiscing on the actions of my great-grandfather, I concluded that he had adopted this extremist behavior that originated with Tomlinson, founder of the Church of God of Prophecy. When the Church of God of Prophecy was introduced to the Bahamas in the early 1900s, not only were people attracted to the church because of its friendliness, opened-armed and free expression of worship, but also they came because of divine healing. In those early days of my grand- and great-grandparents, I was told, there were no trained medical practitioners or pharmaceutical personnel on the islands, and even if there had been, the natives did not have money to purchase medication or pay for medical services.

Their means of survival was dependence on God, home remedies, and untrained medical personnel, in particular, midwives. I was told that my maternal great-grandmother, after giving birth to one of her twins, died in childbirth with the other baby still unborn. It was a sad event! It was her first pregnancy, and as destiny would have it, the infant who survived was my maternal grandfather. Hence, when Pentecostalism was introduced to the Bahamas with divine healing as one of its beliefs and practices, and the natives were able to observe these healing events and in some cases experience it for themselves, many were drawn to this new movement and some became a part of the fellowship.

As I reflect on events leading to my decision on divine/faith healing as a topic for my thesis-project, in addition to the aforementioned, during my first-year residency as a Doctor of Ministry student, I was contemplating which area of studies I would address. It was during one of those morning class sessions that the professor lectured on that topic. It seemed as if people were not sharing much about their sickness and were not requesting prayers for healing like they did back in the early days, and we are reminded in Scripture, “ye have not, because ye ask not.”⁸ So I began to think that according to this Scripture, people may not have been receiving their healing because they refused to ask. At that point I felt compelled to share a recent diagnosis from my doctor, for which he had already determined that I needed surgery. After sharing my testimony with the class, the professor asked the female students to lay hands on me during the prayers. The revelation was not quite clear at that time, but I knew that this is where the Lord

⁸ James 4:2. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

was leading because there were questions to which I felt I needed answers. Sometime later, I received the results from a test that I had done revealing a negative report.

Further, to encourage me in my decision, in learning about my thesis-project and my possible topic, a non-Bahamian church member shared with me that in the early 1980s she and her husband attended one of the national conventions of the church in the Bahamas, and at that time she was extremely ill, which made sitting for any period of time difficult.

It was customary in those settings to devote a special time for healing. A message on divine healing would be delivered and testimonies would be given to boost the faith of those desiring healing. The ministers would assemble and pray before the formation of a "Prayer Line." Then ministers would organize themselves in pairs, and individuals who needed healing would pass along the Prayer Line and be prayed for by the ministers. At the end of the line, there were ministers who would anoint the individual with oil. This sister, alluded to earlier, received her healing instantly and gave her testimony of healing. She was able to travel home without the discomfort of her previous ailment.

She also shared another testimony of a recent healing in the Bahamas. In 2015 she had injured her knee, which made movement difficult for her. The following year, 2016, as she made plans to travel to the Bahamas on another ministry trip with her husband, she remembered how she was healed many years ago in the Bahamas and prayed that she would receive another miracle. On one of those ministry assignments which necessitated further traveling by plane and then by boat, special prayers for

healing were offered on behalf of this sister and the pastor, who was also ill at the time. When she got to her hotel room after the service, she realized that she was healed, and the pastor also had a successful recovery.

After examining the impact of divine healing in the early introduction of Pentecostalism to the Bahamas, it would be important in this study to know the extent to which it is operating and affecting the church today. Are people still seeking the Lord on behalf of their sick relatives by standing in the gap? Are they desperate enough to persevere on behalf of the sick individuals like the parents who sought healing for their children? One such example is the Syrophoenician woman whose daughter was possessed with an evil spirit and who went to Jesus on her behalf seeking healing (Mark 7:25-30). Another example is Jairus, whose little girl was gravely ill and who also sought healing on his daughter's behalf (Luke 8: 41-54). In both cases, Jesus miraculously healed the children.

In my recollection, in any settlement on the islands of the Bahamas, when the older members are informed of sickness in a family, they organize themselves in groups and spend time praying and singing for the deliverance of the individual. Additionally, they assist with the chores in the home during this time, thus relieving the family of any additional stress. It would be good to know whether this kind of passion and brotherly concern still exists among church members. It would also be good to know if pastors and leaders are still providing opportunities for healing through prayer lines and other special services.

Divine/Faith Healing, Points of Contact, and Other Interventions

When I think of divine healing, I think of a miraculous occurrence that cannot be explained by human intellect; it is a supernatural event that must to be accepted through faith. Matt Slick defines divine healing as “the act of God through the person of Jesus and the prayers of the saints where a person is healed physically and/or delivered from emotional, mental, or spiritual affliction. Most often, it is seen as a physical healing of sickness, such as cancer, diseases, deformities, etc., but it is not restricted to the physical.”⁹

Sickness is inevitable; hence, at some point in our lives, most of us, because of our mortality, will become ill. The degree of the illness may vary from one individual to another; however, for obvious reasons no one wants to be sick and in pain or discomfort. For some, it is viewed as a horrible and debilitating state which in some cases can render the individual helpless.

Symbolism was one of the means used from Bible days by persons to increase their faith, thus enabling them to receive divine healing.

Messages and testimonies of divine/faith healing were commonplace and spread rapidly in the early days. Pentecostalism taught its members that increased faith would help them in their obedience to the Word of God. From the early days of the Church of God of Prophecy, a bottle or bottles of olive oil that were prayed for by the elders stood

⁹ Matt Slick, “What Is Divine Healing and Is It for today?” accessed June, 2017, <https://carm.org/is-divine-healing-for-today>.

on the pulpit ready to be used if there was a need. Elders are admonished to “pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”¹⁰

Apart from being prayed for and anointed with oil, there were other points of contact which were utilized in divine healing process.

Prayer Cloths

Prayer cloths were little white squares of fabric (nowadays, they can be any color and any shape) that were prayed over by the elders of the church and anointed with oil before distribution.

Persons attending annual general assemblies of the Church of God of Prophecy were certain to return home with many anointed prayer cloths which were distributed to friends and family members who were unable to attend the assemblies. This was a special treat for which they all looked forward to receiving. These prayer cloths were kept in a special place and used on family or church members for any type of sicknesses they would have experienced. The prayer cloths were placed on the area of the pain while the elders prayed. This method of contact can be found in the Bible, as it is written, “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”¹¹

¹⁰ James 5:14.

¹¹ Acts 19:11-12.

Church Magazines (International and National Publications)

Before the church magazines were bundled and packaged for shipping, special prayers were offered for them, along with the laying on of anointed hands of the elders. Hence, members, through faith, viewed these magazines as contact points for healing.

Additionally, apart from ministry updates, messages of encouragement, and reports of events, included in the magazines were personal testimonies of divine healing. An example from the international church publication, *White Wing Messenger*, is the testimony of a young man from Ubon, Thailand, who tells of his healing from a severe allergic condition (see Appendix A, Testimony of Divine Healing).

From the national publication, *The Encouragement*, there are numerous testimonies of healing from high fever to heart condition submitted by Bahamian church members. So while the members of the church in the Bahamas were reading testimonies of divine healing from around the world in the International monthly publication, which also helped to build their faith, it was comforting to know that members in the Bahamas were also experiencing divine healing, as the various testimonies of healing could be found in the Bahamian monthly publication (examples of a few of these testimonies can be found in Appendix B, Examples of Testimonies from the *Encouragement*).

These testimonies were read over and over again and shared with the sick to help build up their faith. Next to the Holy Bible in homes was the magazine, which could be found neatly placed on the side or under the Bible on a stand or near to the rocking chair in the living-room. Members refused to discard any of these magazines but kept

them to lay on sick folks for healing. After they would have accumulated a few of them, they would distribute some to others.

The Radio

Before television or the Internet was introduced to the islands, the transistor radio kept the natives informed on what was going on in other parts of the world. However, for the believer, the radio was a means of entertainment but also made it possible to listen to church services by famous preachers. During these services everyone would sit attentively and listen. Before the service closed, the preacher would invite those who needed healing to touch the radio as a point of contact while he prayed. There were many testimonies of healing.

Beliefs and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy

In the early days, the church was adamant about members not taking medicine, and while the church certainly had its reasons based on biblical principles that Christians should trust the Lord and exercise faith for divine healing, there are many biblical examples where Jesus used herbal or other means of assistance, and he must have had his reason for doing so.

From its very entrance into the Bahamas, the Church of God began its mission outreach by means of street meetings, which proved to be a successful way to reach the people because in most cases they did not have church buildings and it made it possible

for people who might have happened to be in the area to stop by and join the service, if they so desired.

In 1901, a Bahamian couple by the name of Edmond and Rebecca Barr, who were at that time residing in the United States, experienced the blessings of salvation in this new movement. Being excited about this newfound experience, they were eager to share with their homefolks, so they traveled to the Bahamas on a mission trip where outdoor meetings were held. Mrs. Arabella Eneas had been touched by the messages being preached had become very ill. She invited Edmond Barr and his wife into her home to pray for her. The missionaries accepted the invitation: “they prayed for her; they laid hands on her, and she was healed.”¹² Testifying of her healing, Arabella writes, “Praise the Lord this morning for saving, sanctifying and filling me with the Holy Ghost. I am praising Him because He is my Saviour, my Healer, and my All in All. Thank God for the blood has power.”¹³

After this experience, Mrs. Eneas was willing to follow this Pentecostal ministry, the Church of God. Shortly afterwards her husband joined her in this new fellowship and extended hospitality to this ministry couple by allowing them to keep services in a large hall that was owned by him. He also provided living accommodations for them. Wilmore and Arabella Eneas were among the first to become members of the Church of God in the Bahamas.

Later, according to Varlack, in 1911, a year after being selected general overseer of the Church of God, A. J. Tomlinson, being led by the Spirit, made his first international

¹² Cleveland W. Eneas, *Let the Church Roll On* (Nassau, Bahamas: n.p., 1976), 3.

¹³ Arabella Eneas, *The Evening Light and Church of God Evangel* (June 1, 1910), 5.

campaign in the Bahamas, thus making the “Bahamas, the first mission field of the Church of God outside the United States of America.”¹⁴

Prior to his coming, there were missionaries such as Edmond Barr and his wife and R. M. Evans, who had been doing missionary outreach in the Bahamas. Tomlinson was not an ordinary missionary; he was the international leader who brought with him a group of mission workers to further impact the islands with the message of salvation, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost, and divine healing.

In 1923, Stanley Ferguson was promoted to the office of bishop and appointed as the first indigenous Colonial Overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas. Later, as is noted by Hermis Ferguson, he was Overseer of The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. In 1934, Stanley became very ill and was confined to bed. His words were, “If God didn’t heal him he was not going to consult any earthly physician for help.”¹⁵ Hermis continued by pointing out that Stanley preached divine healing, and practiced it to his death. Some of his last words to his ministers who were around his bedside were, “Boys, Divine Healing is Right.”¹⁶ Hermis states that Stanley surely kept the faith and while relatives and friends were praying incessantly for him, “the Lord rested him from his labours, July 23rd 1934, at 6:45a.m.”¹⁷

As was noted, there were family members, friends, and ministers at his bedside praying for him. In my earlier years, this was commonplace in the church; persons took time out of their busy schedules to join family members in prayer for the sick family

¹⁴ Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy*, 188.

¹⁵ Hermis Ferguson, *A Brief History of the Life and Religious Work of Stanley R. Ferguson* (Nassau, Bahamas: n.p., 1936), 9.

¹⁶ Ferguson, *Brief History*, 10.

¹⁷ Ferguson, *Brief History*, 10.

members. Sometimes they would spend the entire night at the home singing, praying, and reading Scriptures on healing to encourage them. This was in keeping with the Scripture to “bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”¹⁸ It was also the reaction of the church when King Herod began persecuting the believers. He had John executed and had Peter kept in prison to be executed after the Passover, “but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”¹⁹ It will be interesting to know whether this kind of love and concern for each other is still vibrant in the church today.

Stanley’s situation is thought provoking. It is difficult to understand how one come to grips and helps onlookers with a situation such as his. Here was a young man whose first wife, who was instrumental in him receiving salvation, died by the time they had celebrated their first anniversary. He was now remarried and busily engaged in the construction of the church’s main auditorium on East Street, Nassau, and working tirelessly in other church work. He suddenly became ill and died despite all of the prayers of the saints. How can this be explained so that it will affect the church in a positive way? Situations such as this are not the appropriate time for a sermon or a dissertation; therefore, using wisdom, one will need the shortest and quickest way to get to the point in presenting the will of God. Thus Christ himself becomes the ultimate example given his experience in the Garden of Gethsemane in accepting His Father’s will.

¹⁸ Galatians 6:2.

¹⁹ Acts 12:5.

Our forebears were adamant about their belief in healing and were not prepared to let anyone persuade them otherwise. In the early days, many Pentecostal members believed that God had the power to heal them, and this belief was therefore so strong that they would rather die than go to a doctor or take medication, as was heard earlier in this chapter in the words of Stanley Ferguson, a national leader, and as will be seen later on in this chapter in the words and actions of Tomlinson, international leader. Taking medication or going to the doctor was an indication that one's faith in God had been weakened, or as some would have bluntly put it, "You have backslidden!"

The following is an extract of the preamble of the Beliefs and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy:

From its beginnings, the Church of God of Prophecy has based its beliefs on "the whole Bible rightly divided." We accept the Bible as God's Holy Word, inspired, inerrant, and infallible. We believe the Bible to be God's written revelation of Himself to mankind and our guide in all matters of faith; therefore, we look to the Bible as our highest authority for doctrine, practice, organization, and discipline.²⁰

Following the Preamble are descriptions of twenty-nine biblical principles, beliefs, and practices of the church; one of which is divine healing (see the outline of divine healing in Appendix C, Divine Healing as Stated by the Church of God of Prophecy).

Inasmuch as Tomlinson resided in North America, the influence and effect of his ministry on the church was far reaching; therefore, his position on divine healing would have greatly influenced the church worldwide. Additionally, this organization met annually as members from around the world would assemble for one week for a time of

²⁰ Church of God of Prophecy, *Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2008), 5.

teaching/preaching, impartation, fellowship, discussion, and transaction of church business. In the early years of these gatherings, among activities held was a night which was specifically designed for the healing ministry. This was the purpose for which many, including the sick, would have traveled to this annual assembly. The delegates, on their return home, further affected the natives in their various communities, not only about the worship experiences but also to give testimonies of divine healing and share prayer cloths. In his book, "Upon this Rock" Volume 2, C. T. Davidson gives a very detailed description of one such night of healing (See Appendix D, Many are Divinely Healed).

Early leaders of the Pentecostal movement saw prayer as an essential part of this journey and were committed to much prayer and fasting because they understood what Jesus said to his disciples when they were unable to heal the little boy who was possessed with a demonic spirit. It happened that while Jesus, Peter, James, and John went to the mountain to pray before they experienced the transfiguration, the father of the little boy brought him to the disciples to be healed, but the disciples were not successful in healing the boy. On their return from the mountain, the father, still desperate to have his son healed, told Jesus about his disappointment in the disciples. Jesus then rebuked the devil and the boy was healed. The disciples wanted to know why they were not successful in healing the boy. Jesus told them, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."²¹

Prayer for healing was almost a natural part of any given service. A service was hardly ever brought to a close without praying for the sick. People did not wait for folks

²¹ Mark 9:29.

to ask for healing; they invited those who were sick to come forward and they would pray for their healing. Family members were encouraged to “stand in the gap” for their sick family members.

In reading the diary of Tomlinson, it is interesting to note that many of his entries indicated the names of persons for whom he prayed in the services. At times, he simply stated that he had prayed for a brother or sister who had a certain ailment. For example, he would sometimes comment on the outcome of the prayer and praise the Lord if a healing occurred, or mentioned that the individual was not healed and seemed to exhibit a concern. An entry in his diary on July 9, 1901, states, “Baby Jessie was again seized by the enemy and almost passed away but we rallied our forces, confessed our sins, begged forgiveness of each other and God marched out and again, met the enemy and routed the death angel and she is yet alive and seems much relieved. Praise the Lord.”²²

On the following day, according to Tomlinson, “Baby Jessie was taken worse and her parents and myself and wife covenanted to fast and pray as David did until she was either well or gone to heaven. About sundown she left us and as we did all we could and turned every stone we knew we are in victory crying, ‘Thy will be done.’”²³

Readers will have noticed that he said that they did everything that they could have done, but there is no mention of a visit to the doctor or administering medication to help the child get well. After the child had passed away, they were resolved that it

²² A. J. Tomlinson, *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson* (1901–1924) (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2011), 20.

²³ Tomlinson, *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson*, 20.

was God's will. Throughout Tomlinson's diary, there are many entries of healing messages and prayers for the sick. While it makes one wonder why they did not at least try to bring some relief to the child by way of home remedy or aid her in some way, one might say that it was because of their strong faith in their belief. Some persons may ask, How do you decide that it was God's will? while others may argue, How do you decide that it was not? It is difficult to persuade an individual with such strong belief to take an alternate view. This is among some of the problems for which I hope to find enlightenment in this study.

Tomlinson's great passion for the healing ministry could have been influenced by the impact of the healing he experienced as an infant. Lillie Duggar writes about his frailty as an infant and the difficulty experienced in caring for him. She notes that one day as his mother prayed to God, she said, "if this child is never going to amount to anything let him die. He is such a care. If thou hast something special for him to do, heal him up and let him live."²⁴ Based on the history of his life, can it therefore be concluded that God indeed had something special for Tomlinson to do because he was healed and was a great man of God, not only in his preaching but also his strong passion for the healing ministry.

From experience, sometimes as Christians, we know how to preach healing, but when sickness comes our way, we find it difficult to exercise the faith to receive the healing. As is stated by Tomlinson, "It is one thing to hear of the truth of healing in the atonement and know about it, and rejoice in it while in good health, and another thing

²⁴ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 18 (excerpt was taken from the Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy, 1941).

to be delivered into the hands of Satan, as was dear old brother Job, and stand true in the test.”²⁵

This strong passion for divine healing is what Tomlinson would have preached as he traveled the islands of the Bahamas spreading the gospel of Christ and introducing people to the Pentecostal movement. Members were encouraged in Tomlinson’s word “to stand bravely for divine healing according to Scriptures.”²⁶ He continues by noting that “the doctrine for ‘healing’ is true if we all die.”²⁷

From all that I have heard and read about A. J. Tomlinson, he was very militant, which is understandable given his military background; Reading his harsh statements, one can conclude that he was an Extremist. The following quote is another example of A. J. Tomlinson’s passion for Divine Healing in the Church, which most times seem to be taken to the extreme. He writes, “This is to inform everybody that gets sick that the Lord is still our healer. Everybody that takes the obligation of membership in the Church promises to take the Bible way for healing. Keep prayed up so you will not fail when the test comes.”²⁸

Duggar, writing about the passion for healing possessed by the leader of the Church of God, asserts that Tomlinson in his desire to ensure that the members adhere to this teaching of the church would often find a way to call attention to it. He was convinced that healing was provided for all in the atonement and wanted to encourage

²⁵ A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2011), 16.

²⁶ Tomlinson, *Last Great Conflict*, 16.

²⁷ Tomlinson, *Last Great Conflict*, 16.

²⁸ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 571 (an excerpt from *White Wing Messenger*, July 17, 1937).

members to trust God for their healing. Quoting from the *White Wing Messenger*, (January 19, 1935), Duggar notes these words of Tomlinson:

I believe there is much more preaching needed on the subject of divine healing. Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, it will serve to stimulate faith to produce the Scriptures and build up a big structure by putting them together. The Church of God stands for divine healing and we want the faith of our people built up high in this special point of doctrine so they will forget about the old way of calling doctors and resorting to the use of medicine when anything gets the matter with themselves or their children. God is our healer and why pay out money for medicine and doctors? Better put the money in the Church and resort to the Bible way for healing.²⁹

As a minister and the wife of a pastor, I have heard the cries of many family members questioning why God did not heal their loved ones or why he allowed them to die. This sentiment is expressed especially when the deceased was a faithful individual and worker for the Lord. Commenting on this sentiment, Harold Kushner writes, “The misfortunes of good people are not only a problem to the people who suffer and to their families. They are a problem to everyone who wants to believe in a just and fair and livable world. They inevitably raise questions about the goodness, the kindness, even the existence of God.”³⁰

Through the survey process, the problem of recognizing and acknowledging the will of God will be addressed. Like Paul, would persons be able to conclude that it was or was not God’s will for them to be healed? Could persons who never received their healing overcome their state of self-pity, and begin to appreciate the fact that they are blessed beyond many? Do they have faith enough to acknowledge their blessings and

²⁹ Duggar, A. J. Tomlinson, 488.

³⁰ Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 6-7. Kushner, rabbi laureate of Temple Israel in Natick, Massachusetts, wrote this book after his son died of a premature aging disease.

use their situation to advance the kingdom of God, being encouragers instead of complainers?

When my mother was sick with cancer, we prayed for her healing, but once we realized the extent of her sickness we wanted God's will to be done in her life. Many nights as I sang, prayed, and cried with her and watched her suffer, it would become unbearable for me. I would talk to God and tell him that if he was not going to heal her, please do not allow her to suffer. All of this was out of my pain and state of helplessness. I was not quite sure what I was asking for, so I always ended by saying, "Lord, not my will but thy will be done." In examining the problem of this thesis-project, it will be vital to look at having the ability to understand God's will for our lives and the confidence to accept the same. However, what may be more important is how one determines what is or is not God's will.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

While there is limited literature, specifically on divine/faith healing in the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas and its impact, there is literature generally on divine healing in Pentecostalism, the umbrella of the Church of God of Prophecy. It is unfortunate, but according to my forebears, in the early beginning of the Church of God of Prophecy and continuing into its developmental stages, much of the history was passed on from one generation to the next orally through testimonies or in fireside talk. It would appear that many of early members, especially in regions or nations like the Bahamas, either were incapable of preserving vital information in writing or might not have had an appreciation for it. Hence, they did what they knew best, talked about it. Sadly, eventually, oral history can lose its authenticity as those who are passing it on can take the liberty to use what they think may be important or make unnecessary embellishment. When this happens, later generations could be faced with deciding what might have been fact or fiction based on their present experience.

However, what is important to remember is that our forebears would have been able to express, present, or record their experiences only in a manner or on the level of their ability to do so, and many of them did not possess the average educational skills. Literature supports the fact that in the early days, the Pentecostal church seemed to have attracted the poor and uneducated. Hence, it may be accurate to say that while

members of the early Pentecostalism movement might have been uneducated, they seemed to have been driven by an internal force as they relied upon the power and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, who was their teacher, provider, and protector.

It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to research various literature to determine the authors' position on divine healing; discuss some of the views of the faith healers; examine what critics have to say about divine healing and its authenticity; and discuss the impact of divine healing on the church.

Divine/Faith Healers

In his commentary on divine healing, Harrell notes that the healing evangelists all had different healing techniques. Many of them kept the attention of their audiences with their charisma. He described some of these men as impelling, flamboyant preachers. Most were dedicated and spent long, grueling hours on stage, praying, clapping, shouting, and pleading for miracles to take place; it was not easy for them. However, he did not fail to point out that this type of ministry left many healers exhausted and broken after a while. "The resilience of Oral Roberts became a legend among his peers."¹

According to Cornelius van der Laan, the message and practice of divine/faith healing has often been repudiated by both the clerical and medical orders. This rejection was brought about because the faith healers held the position that God can heal through prayer and faith without medical aid, which was around the same time that

¹ David Edwin Harrell Jr., *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 6.

modern medical science had just started in the Netherlands. The rise of the healing movement in the nineteenth century started mainly as established faith homes, where those seeking healing would stay for several weeks and were given specific instruction in divine healing. The names of several persons with established faith homes as listed by van der Laan include Johann Christoph Blumhardt, Dorothea Trudel, Samuel Zeller, and Otto Stockmayer. This healing ministry continued to spread throughout Europe as people began to attend conferences and read about it. Further, van der Laan noted that using Matt 8:16-17 to interpret Isa 53:4, Stockmayer concluded that Christ bore our sicknesses on the cross. He then stated that “the realization of God’s promises depended on one’s exercising of faith.”²

In his discourse on the fact that New Testament healings did not depend on the faith of the recipient, MacArthur points out, “Charismatic healers like Benny Hinn readily blame their countless failures on the lack of faith—not their own faith, of course, but the faith of those who don’t get healed.”³ By doing this, many unhealed individuals would believe that God did not heal them because they did have enough faith. So, all of the credit goes to Hinn when there is a healing, but when there is not, the blame is laid at the feet of the individual who was not healed. To verify the fact that healing does not depend on the faith of the recipient, MacArthur listed a few biblical examples, including the ten lepers (only one of the lepers expressed faith),⁴ the demoniacs,⁵ and the

² Jan A. B. Jongeneel, *Experiences of the Spirit: Conference on Pentecostal and Charismatic Research in Europe at Utrecht University 1989* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1991), 86.

³ John MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 162.

⁴ Luke 17:11-19.

⁵ Matthew 8:28-29; Mark 1:23-26.

crippled man at the pool of Bethesda, who did not know who Jesus was until after he was healed.⁶ The same was true for the apostles: Peter healed the lame man without questioning his faith,⁷ and Paul delivered the unbelieving slave girl from demon possession.⁸ In all of these healings, MacArthur concluded that the possession of faith did not seem to be a prerequisite.

Many individuals in the early beginnings of Pentecostalism and today claimed to have or have had the gift of healing. Among the earlier Pentecostal ministers were John G. Lake, Smith Wigglesworth, Aimee Semple McPherson, A. A. Allens, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Charles S. Price, Kathryn Kuhlman, Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts, T. L. Osborne, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Hagin, and Reinhart Bonnke. Some had what was known as faith homes, where sick folks would reside temporarily while they awaited their healing.

Jongeneel tells of Andrew Murray, who was ordered by his physician to stop preaching because of a throat problem. It was suggested that he should go to Europe for a change of scenery and atmospheric condition, and at the same time he could seek medical attention. At this time Murray had already been drawn to the question of faith healing and had read some literature on the topic. On his arrival in Europe, he stayed at Boardman's faith home and was healed in three weeks. Murray accepted the teaching on faith healing and published his views in various languages. He then systematized the

⁶ John 5:13.

⁷ Acts 3:6-8.

⁸ Acts 16:18.

biblical basis for divine healing and provided the following practical rules by which the believer could obtain healing:

- Let the Word of God be your guide in this matter.
- Understand that sickness is a chastisement on account of sin.
- Be assured it is the will of God to heal you.
- Accept by an act of faith the Lord Jesus as your Physician.
- Exercise your faith.
- Do not be surprised if your faith is tested.
- Dedicate yourself now, in the power of your Lord, to a new life of faith.
- Be a witness for Him who heals you.⁹

There were times, however, when there was no manifestation of healing even when the individual and the church exercised faith for the healing. This fact was difficult for many Pentecostals because of their belief that faith in Christ would bring healing to the sick.

Quoting from a report in the *Atlantic Journal* (April 1914), with reference to healer Maria B. Woodworth-Etter, whose husband was sick and was not healed, Hardesty list the following reasons given by the faith healer as to why the healing had failed: Because their lifework was completed, his sickness defied her treatment, lack of faith, God had a purpose in keeping him sick, and the weather aggravated his rheumatism, but still blames lack of faith for its continuance.¹⁰ Continuing with her report, the author further noted that Woodworth-Etter went on to give further excuses claiming that her husband was a seventy-year-old and that traveling from coast to coast constantly exposed him to the weather. She claimed that she had tried giving him faith

⁹ Jongeneel, *Experiences of the Spirit*, 87.

¹⁰ Nancy A. Hardesty, *Faith Cure: Divine Healing in the Holiness and Pentecostal Movements* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 131.

and believed that it was what had kept him alive. She also admitted that a doctor had seen her sick husband and ended with a disclaimer: “I don’t tell people not to see doctors, you know, but I do tell them when doctors have failed to cure them: ‘Come to the Lord.’”¹¹

Divine Healing Critics

Many authors have agreed that the topic of faith healing, has always been one of contention from Bible days and still causes much discussion today. The skeptic will find a way to argue the impossibility of faith healing, and because he or she does not understand it, his or her only way of describing it is to call it a hoax.

In every century the Spirit has unceasingly given the gifts needed to build and protect the Body of Christ. The challenge particular to the gift of healing is that it can easily be imitated or co-opted by evil powers so that what was once a demonstration of God’s Good News can become a source of pride and vainglory, leading both the minister and those to whom he ministers into a state of distraction or even ruin.¹²

According to Kalu, “sickness could be physical, psychological, socio-economic, or political. Health is achieved through reconciliation among human beings as well as by restoring the integrity of creation.”¹³ He further points out that one of the drawbacks he sees in this situation is the fact that Pentecostals have placed their focus on physical

¹¹ Hardesty, *Faith Cure*, 131.

¹² Stanley Burgess and Edward M. van der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2002, 2003), 697.

¹³ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 265.

healing; therefore, when healing does not occur, critics begin to debate the authenticity of the healing and look at possible fraud.

“The most contentious aspect of Pentecostal theology is the causal connection between personal sin, the sins of ancestors (or ‘iniquities of the fathers’), and the health of the patient. Critics claim that this connection turns the victim into a scapegoat and evades personal responsibility of the sufferer.”¹⁴ Kalu commented on the fact that Pentecostals have spoken against the insensitivity of Job’s friends to his situation which drove them to pass judgment on him under the guise of trying to be helpful. Kalu continues by quoting Walter Hollenweger, who argues, “while it is true that God’s faithfulness and promise to heal are eternal, God has the freedom to choose how, when and whether to act. Therefore, the causal connection to sin is *expressis verbis* rejected by the gospel; there are healthy sinners and sick saints.”¹⁵ This statement, however, did not come across well with the mainline churches, which believed that having faith was not an entitlement to automatic healing, and felt that this could lead Pentecostals to wrongful judgment. Their view was that Pentecostals should not trumpet their healing because those who are not healed or were not successful in healing the sick could succumb to defeat. Hollenweger further stresses the fact that a Christian theology of healing must start with creation. He continues by saying:

God has made humans (not only Christian humans) so wonderfully that they have in themselves gifts of healing. The Bible tells us that we live because God breathed his Spirit into us. If he takes his Spirit away we die. It is therefore not

¹⁴ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 264.

¹⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 264.

astonishing that this Spirit of God liberates forces of healing in Christians and non-Christians alike.¹⁶

Literature also reveals that theology of healing continues to surface; everyone seems to have a theology to “sell” to his or her readers. In presenting Oral Roberts’s theology, Synan says that Roberts’s theology of healing has been highly influential in the charismatic movement of the twentieth century, and according to Synan, Roberts was “a major innovator of the Pentecostal theology of healing.”¹⁷ In writing about the healing ministry of Roberts, Synan points out that his theology of healing was a result of the preaching that he heard in the Pentecostal setting, his experiences, and his belief that healing faith was directly related to “the hearing of the Word of God.”¹⁸

However, MacArthur had a different view of Roberts’s ministry than Synan did. He noted that after Roberts’s death, when persons were offering flowery obituaries of praise, his opinion of Roberts was quite the opposite: “Oral Roberts’s influence is not something Bible-believing Christians should celebrate. Virtually every aberrant idea the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement spawned after 1950 can be traced in one way or another to Oral Roberts’s influence.”¹⁹ MacArthur noted that Roberts claimed to have raised many persons from the dead but that those alleged miracles were not verifiable. “Nonetheless, he paved the way for all charismatic preachers, televangelists, faith healers, con men, and charlatans who dominate religious media today. In fact, Roberts

¹⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origin and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 243.

¹⁷ Vinson Synan, ed., *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century: Insights, Analysis, and Future Trends from World-Renowned Scholars* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2011), 318.

¹⁸ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity*, 319.

¹⁹ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 155.

did more than anyone in the early Pentecostal Movement to influence mainstream evangelicalism into accepting these deceptive ideas.”²⁰

According to MacArthur, Roberts’s message of health and wealth is the only thing some people think about when they hear the word *gospel*. “Countless people around the world,” he says, “think of the gospel as a message of material riches and physical healing rather than the infinitely greater blessings of forgiveness from sin and the eternal blessing of the believer’s spiritual union with Christ.”²¹

MacArthur criticizes faith healers for what he claims is counterfeit or staged healing. He points out the following:

If Benny Hinn could really do what he claims, he could empty hospitals and curb diseases in Third World countries. Like Jesus, he would be able to banish sickness and suffering in whatever regions he visited. But because he does not possess the true gift, Hinn requires people to come to him—to the place where he can manipulate the audience and control all the details.²²

Overall, MacArthur describes Hinn as being histrionic, a crowd manipulator, con artist, and hypnotist. He notes, “Unlike Benny Hinn’s alleged healings, for which there is no authoritative verification, the miraculous healings performed by Christ and the apostles could not be discounted—even by those openly antagonistic to the gospel.”²³

Clements points out that “neither Jesus nor his disciples failed at a healing and then blamed it on the person’s (or their own) lack of faith, as many modern faith healers

²⁰ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 157.

²¹ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 157.

²² MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 173.

²³ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 170.

do. Healings were performed on believers and unbelievers alike.”²⁴ He further commented on the fact that Pentecostal and charismatic Christians would pray for healing and then humbly leave the outcome to God. However, he hastens to note that there is evidence that some healings do not follow the scriptural pattern and are therefore counterfeit. His argument is that the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor 12 that the gifts, including the gift of healing, are given by the same Spirit. He points out that the plural, “gifts of healings,”²⁵ is an indication that each healing that takes place is a gift by itself. “No one is given the gift to carry on a healing ministry in which he has the continuous power to heal everyone or anyone who comes to be healed. No one has the power to heal at will.”²⁶ He informs his readers that in the early church, the Holy Spirit guided the apostles and others in matters of who to heal and when to heal them, then provided the power to heal at that particular moment.

Impact of Divine Healing

“Healing is about liberation from all that dehumanizes; it is the restoration of life.”²⁷ Kalu then goes on to quote Jacques Matthey, who says, “To experience healing is not just to experience freedom from sickness and illness, or problems and suffering. Healing is a sign of what the Old Testament calls ‘shalom’ (peace, salvation).”²⁸

²⁴ Arthur J. Clements, *Pentecostals and Charismatics: A Confessional Lutheran Evaluation* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 169.

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:28.

²⁶ Clements, *Pentecostals and Charismatics*, 169-70.

²⁷ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 265.

²⁸ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 265.

According to Kalu, the Greek word *soteria* is used for both health and salvation.

In reference to the importance of health and healing in Africa, he notes that “healing is the heartbeat of the liturgy and the entire religious life. It brings the community of suffering together; it ushers supernatural power into the gathered community and enables all to bask together in its warmth.”²⁹ He then proceeded to tell how he watched the healing of a boy who was deaf and dumb, which resulted in much rejoicing in the form of dancing and praising God. Despite the loudness of the celebration going on, persons from the neighbourhood joined in the celebration rather than complaining of having their peaceful Sunday afternoon ruined.

However, Rafael D. Martinez presented an opposite observation. In an article which he was inspired to write after a visit to one of Benny Hinn’s crusade meetings, he expressed his disappointment and heart-wrenching experience of persons leaving the service without being healed, in particular, a little boy whose parents had brought him to the meeting to be healed. He noted that they were among the last to leave the sanctuary. He writes,

I had to wonder if they asked why their child was leaving the same way he came? Did his parents agonize over whether they had a deficient and incomplete faith? What sin might they be asking themselves were they guilty of? What generational curse had to be seed-faith broken? When Hinn told them to believe God for miracles, why didn’t God sweep into that place and take that beautiful little boy up in His great nail-scarred hands and quicken his tiny body and spare him the uncertain future he faces ahead? I couldn’t tear my eyes away and I have not forgotten the poignancy and puzzle of this moment.³⁰

²⁹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 263.

³⁰ Rafael D. Martinez, “Miracles Today? A Benny Hinn Layover In Cleveland, Tennessee Remembered,” accessed October 10, 2017, Spiritwatch.org/firehinncrusade.htm.

Referring to the Pentecostal movement in Puerto Rico, in his essay “Pentecostalism in Puerto Rican Society,” Anthony L. LaRuffa writes, “Although beginning as a religion of the poor and oppressed and certainly continuing as such for many Ciprianeros and other Puerto Ricans, it readily adjusted itself to more affluent conditions.”³¹ Like some of the other fundamentalist movements of the past, he noted, Pentecostalism possessed the propensity to adapt to changing socio-cultural conditions.

In examining the growth of Pentecostalism in the Caribbean and why persons converted to Pentecostalism, Margolies said,

If they were simply looking for the most effective way of weathering a personal illness, then faith healing would seem to be the crux of Pentecostal rituals. But once they become committed converts, regardless of the initial reason for recruitment, then faith healing must be placed in the context of a compelling doctrine that promises to transcend other ideologies in reshaping one’s personal values.³²

In an essay on “Pentecostalism in Haiti: Healing and Hierarchy,” Fredrick J. Conway writes, “‘Divine Healing’ (Fr. *Guérison divine*) was a primary activity of all of the Pentecostal congregations which were observed during the fifteen months of fieldwork in Haiti. Pentecostalism offers treatment for illness in three forms: prayer, laying on of hands, and conversion itself.”³³ He confirms that more than three-quarters of

³¹ Anthony L. LaRuffa, “Pentecostalism in Puerto Rican Society,” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 60.

³² Luise Margolies, “The Paradoxical Growth of Pentecostalism” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 3.

³³ Fredrick J. Conway, “Pentecostalism in Haiti: Healing and Hierarchy,” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 14.

Pentecostals interviewed claimed that they became a part of the fellowship because of a healing experienced by themselves or their children or parents.

Echoing the importance of prayer, one of the three forms offered for healing as noted by Conway, is Tom Renfro, a medical doctor and minister of religion from Norton, Virginia, who experienced divine healing in 1997 after being diagnosed with mantle cell lymphoma. According to Renfro, of the many types of lymphoma, it is one of the worst and is considered to be incurable and untreatable. Two days before the biopsy, Renfro's pastor (who was also his father-in-law), Glen Sturgill, was praying for him, and God said, "I'm going to take him through."

Everyone was excited to hear this good news, as they all knew Pastor Sturgill to be a prophet of God, but they had no idea of what Renfro was about to experience before his triumph. They watched as this disease took its toll on his body. However, understanding the gravity of his diagnosis, Renfro recognized the importance of prayer. His church family would prove to be critical to him during the worst days of his battle. In fact, every time Renfro would find himself being overwhelmed by his experience he would turn to them for strength. "God hears our prayers. The power of prayer is what activates God. It's what He's waiting to hear, for us to cry out to Him, to cry out not only for our needs, but to cry out in worship and thanksgiving, to tell God that He is God and that we trust and love Him."³⁴ Following his miraculous healing, after being discharged from hospital, he went to church to share in a time of thanksgiving with his members who stood with him in prayer throughout his ordeal.

³⁴ Thomas Renfro, M.D., "God's Word Won't Fail," accessed January 30, 2017, <http://www.drrenfro.com>.

The involvement of Oral Roberts, one of the prominent healing preachers, in the healing ministry is credited to Pentecostalism. His father was a Pentecostal preacher; hence, he grew up in a Pentecostal home. He experienced divine healing as a teenager which to him was the greatest miracle ever. Like A. J. Tomlinson, Roberts's early encounter with Pentecostalism and his miraculous healing earlier in life catapulted him into developing a healing ministry. His message spread around the world as a result of technology:

Thousands testified of being healed in these meetings. Through his books, magazines, and radio and television programs, his message of healing began to spread across America and around the world. His television program, which brought the healing crusade into millions of living rooms, was the number one syndicated religious program in America for about almost three decades.³⁵

"Oral Roberts theology of healing has been highly influential in the Charismatic movement of the twentieth century."³⁶

Synan mentioned that Roberts offered six steps toward healing, taught seven rules of healing, and then developed the concept of seed-faith and incorporated his teaching on miracles into his theology of healing. Synan expresses what he termed a fact not well known about Roberts: "that he was open to natural and supernatural avenues of healing. He did not separate the natural from the supernatural. To Roberts, all healing is divine."³⁷

Commenting on the impact of Roberts's ministry, Synan says that it greatly influenced David Yonggi Cho, an Asian pastor and founder of the largest church in the

³⁵ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity*, 318.

³⁶ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity*, 318.

³⁷ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity*, 319.

world. Like Roberts, Cho does not believe that in order to be healed by God, one must forsake medicine. He says, “It is alright to be treated by a doctor and modern medicine.”³⁸

Synan gives this summary:

Both Roberts and Cho outline spiritual disciplines to promote healing and preserve health. Both are open to medical assistance. Both have or developed revolutionary concepts, such as seed faith, point of contact, and the fourth dimension. Their well-defined theologies of healing can be characterized as Biblical, Pentecostal, Charismatic, and contextually appropriate. Both have impacted modern-day healing ministry globally.³⁹

The Church of God of Prophecy presents the following view. It is an excerpt of a question-and-answer period of the International Business Session of the Church of God during its 13th Assembly in 1917:

QUESTION: Would it be wrong for any one [sic] who is trusting in the Lord for their health to give medicine to an unsaved friend in case of sickness?

ANSWER: We cannot make any rigid rule regarding this matter. People must be governed by their own conscience. I could not do it, but others might feel obligated to do so and feel all right about it. No one should condemn another in this matter. Some may be engaged as nurses and if they can give medicine let them do it, but if they become condemned they had better get another job.

QUESTION: Should our people abuse physicians?

ANSWER: No. We should not abuse anybody. Let the world have their physicians.⁴⁰

Kimberley Alexander points out that when Pentecostalism was birthed in the early 1900s, in addition to their strong belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and

³⁸ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity*, 326.

³⁹ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity*, 327-28.

⁴⁰ C. T. Davidson, *Upon This Rock*, vol. 1 (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1973), 487.

speaking in tongues, was their belief in divine/faith healing. So transforming was this inward experience that it was marked by an outward evidence of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. “For these ‘saints’ it meant to trust Jesus wholly as Healer and Great Physician. Why would one not trust the One who had been so good? This all-consuming passion for God drove them to ‘win souls’ or bring others with them on the journey.”⁴¹ The Pentecostal movement became a caring community where physical care for the sick was provided, and for those who needed emotional and spiritual care, there was no neglect.

William J. Seymour, one of the early leaders of Pentecostalism and pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival, viewed divine healing as one of the products of the atonement, a view he held all his life. He saw “the new birth, sanctification, divine healing, and baptism in the Holy Spirit as benefits of the atonement.”⁴² He was criticized by some for placing healing of the body on the same level as salvation of the soul, but he refused to be dissuaded. Following the lead of John Alexander Dowie, Seymour joined with many other Pentecostals in refusing to use doctors and medicine. He stated, “Many Christians will take a doctor before Jesus. They put a doctor between them and the atonement. . . . The doctor gives you poison and you die because you dishonor the atonement.”⁴³

⁴¹ Kimberley Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing: Models in Theology and Practice*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 2 (Blandford Forum, Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2006), 98.

⁴² Vinson Synan and Charles R. Fox Jr., *William J. Seymour, Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos Foundation, 2012), 174.

⁴³ Synan and Fox, *William J. Seymour*, 174.

“Right from the very start, the message of healing has been an integral part of Pentecostal practice.”⁴⁴ There were special days set apart for divine healing meetings, and as van der Laan says, “Physical healing was a regular feature of the meetings, whether by actually taking place, by testimonies, or by illustrations in the sermon. All this strengthened the faith of the members and thus confirmed that God was on their side.”⁴⁵

According to van der Laan, in the early 1900s medical care in the Netherlands were new and was not the best because many of the general practitioners were not well educated. The shortage of practitioners had a great effect on the poor areas, and for the working class medical service was rather expensive. Under these circumstances, faith healing was a welcomed relief because most people could not afford conventional medicine. Hence, to be able to get healing from whatever sickness one may have possessed without a financial cost was good news. In comparing faith healing with folk healing, Jongeneel says, “The practice of faith healing can be compared, to a certain extent, with folk healing because both formed a protest against the scanty accessibility of medical science, social and cultural barriers.”⁴⁶

Comparing divine healing with folk healing does not seem to be the proper thing to do, because folk healing has to do with cultural traditions using native or homemade remedies, and there is a superstitious belief. Divine healing, according to the Free

⁴⁴ Jongeneel, *Experiences of the Spirit*, 94.

⁴⁵ Jongeneel, *Experiences of the Spirit*, 95.

⁴⁶ Jongeneel, *Experiences of the Spirit*, 93.

Dictionary, is a supernatural occurrence which causes all sorts of sicknesses to disappear bringing wholeness to the body. It is unexplainable, but there is proof of healing.⁴⁷

Smith points out that there was a difference between the other denominations in their evangelism outreach. Their aim was not only to convert persons but also to ensure that they made converts “in their own image.” However, “Pentecostals, who emphasized accessibility to God’s power, first won their hearts. Healing, of interest to everyone in Latin America, was essentially a demonstration of God’s power, and receiving this personal attention gives one the assurance that God cares for me personally.”⁴⁸ For Pentecostals, the aim was to help persons to become Christians, without forcing or compelling them to join the denomination. It was a freedom of choice, and divine healing helped greatly in this regard.

According to Margolies, both Conway and Glazier agreed that “faith healing constitutes the essential element of the Pentecostal sermon.”⁴⁹ They continue by stressing the fact that in the face of traditional therapeutic failures, conversion to Pentecostalism served as a backup mechanism.

⁴⁷ “Divine Healing” accessed August 22, 2017, [encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/divine healing](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/divine+healing).

⁴⁸ Calvin L. Smith, ed., *Pentecostal Power: Expressions, Impact, and Faith in Latin American Pentecostalism*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 21.

⁴⁹ Luise Margolies, “The Paradoxical Growth of Pentecostalism” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 3.

Glazier, *Perspectives on Pentecostalism*, 3.

Conclusion

Research of literature has revealed that some faith healers had faith homes where those who were sick were able to stay as they were going through their healing process. There were successes and there were disappointments. However, attempts were made to justify the lack of healing by giving multiple reasons or excuses, but healers were not prepared to accept the blame themselves for healings that did not occur. There are differing views on divine healing itself, as some healers did not see anything wrong in taking medicine, while others were adamant about not using medicine at all.

There are critics who severely criticize divine healers. Critics described those who claimed to perform healing miracles as frauds and manipulators who only wanted to squeeze poor people's money. It was suggested that some healers were careful in choosing venues where they could manipulate the situation. However, it was also suggested that these healing services involved much work on and off stage; hence, it was strenuous for those in charge.

Also, both positive and negative impacts of proclaimed healers were discussed by authors, who pointed out the gullible nature of persons who are willing to accept these claims without question. While some authors seemed to categorize all healers as not being credible, there were others who thought otherwise.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

When God created the earth, everything was perfect and good, as is recorded in the Bible: “And God saw that it was good.”¹ At the end of the sixth day, after the creation of man, God said that it was “very good.” Adam was placed in the garden and given his job assignment and rules. God told him, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”² However, Adam was alone in the garden and needed a suitable companion, so God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”³

Things were going well, until one day Eve had an encounter with Satan and yielded to temptation, thus disobeying God’s command not to eat of that particular tree. While the tendency is to cast blame on Eve, we must realize that according to Scripture the command not to eat of that particular tree was given to Adam before Eve came into existence. So then who is to blame? It is not certain that Adam passed on the instruction correctly or whether he thought it was necessary to tell Eve about it at all. What is certain is the fact that Adam, rather than informing Eve of God’s command, fell prey to Eve’s enticement, just as Satan had planned. This Fall, however, not only has

¹ Genesis 1:10b.

² Genesis 2:16-17.

³ Genesis 2:18.

caused man to become spiritually weak, but also his physical body has become susceptible to sickness. But God had a plan for the spiritual and physical healing of humankind. Among the distinguishing features of Pentecostal spirituality are miracles and healings, examples of which can be found in both the Old and New Testaments.

In the Old Testament, it is told how Hezekiah became very ill and was at the point of death. The Lord sent the prophet Isaiah to deliver this message to Hezekiah: “Set thy house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.”⁴ On receiving the message, Hezekiah prayed to God, who heard his prayer and responded by healing him and adding fifteen more years to his life. However, these fifteen years were not pleasant ones as Hezekiah learned of what would become of his nation: how the Babylonians would take away all of their treasures and wealth, how and his son, Manasseh, who would succeed him, would prove to be an idolatrous leader.

From this we can see that it is always best to allow God’s will to be done in our lives. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane with his disciples praying as he neared the time of his death, he prayed that the cup of suffering be taken away from him but concluded that if it was not possible, he was willing to let the will of his Father be done (Matt 26:36-46). Believers must remember that God shields us from situations that are worse than what we are going through.

As Christians, through Jesus, we too have been empowered to heal the sick as Jesus instructed his disciples. Scripture says, “And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to

⁴ Isaiah 38:1b.

heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”⁵ There is no doubt that healing is included in the atonement for us. “In a scriptural sense, atonement is the expiation of sin by the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. Atonement is necessary to bring about reconciliation.”⁶

Divine Healing: Gradual or Instantaneous, and Should It Be Aided?

Divine healing is one of the spiritual gifts which endows individuals in the church with special abilities to be used as they minister to the needs of believers. The problem in the early church was that rather than unifying the body, spiritual gifts were causing dissension, for those who were operating in certain gifts felt superior to others. For example, those who spoke in tongues confused this with spirituality, thus thinking that they were more spiritual than those who did not speak in tongues. In 1 Cor 12, Paul attempted to clear up this misunderstanding. Paul explained that all spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit and that no gift is better than the others; they all have specific assignments. Among the gifts mentioned in 1 Cor 12 is the gift of healing. While persons continually sought prestige because of their gifts, the apostle Paul pointed out to his readers that they all would be better Christians if they sought after the greatest gift, which is love. Love is that quality that every believer needs in order to live a life of humility as a servant of God.

⁵ Matthew 10:1, 7, 8.

⁶ Katharine Harris, *World's Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: World Publishing, 2004), 69.

Many churches, including the Church of God of Prophecy, believe that divine healing should not be aided by medicine. Then there is the discussion on whether it should be manifested instantly or gradually. An overview of biblical examples shows some divine healing can be immediate while other instances can be gradual. For example, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-25) was not only a gradual healing, but it was also an assisted healing. When the man was presented to Jesus for healing, Jesus took him outside of the village and did something unorthodox; he spat on the man's eyes and then asked him if he saw anything, to which the man responded, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."⁷ This was when Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again and his sight was restored.

An example of an instant healing is that of the man with leprosy who pleaded on his knees to be healed. He said to Jesus, "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."⁸ Jesus seemed to have had a tendency to do things outside of the norm; he reached out his hand and touched the man and immediately the man was healed of his leprosy. According to Jewish law, one was forbidden to touch a leper, but Jesus' act was a demonstration of his power to heal.

Persons who do not believe in medical intervention in divine healing may fail to acknowledge that the herbal or holistic intervention in the healing process of Hezekiah can be considered medicinal. The king had taken ill and had grown worse, and the Bible records, "For Isaiah had said, Let him take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the

⁷ Mark 8:24.

⁸ Mark 1:40b.

boil and he shall recover.”⁹ Can it be said then that God can work in any situation and does not need any assistance in his healing process, whether holistic, herbal, or pharmaceutical? Maybe these situations are encountered to test the obedience of those involved.

The woman with the issue of blood, who after expending all of her money on doctors could not get well, heard of Jesus, the healer. At this point, she exercised her faith for her healing. The crowd was great, which made it difficult for her to get to Jesus, but the thought of her twelve long years of suffering and the opportunity of being delivered was a great faith booster for her. She was determined to get to him regardless of the fact that because of her “issue of blood”¹⁰ she was considered unclean and hence prohibited by Jewish law to be among people. Sometimes, desperate situations may require us to act in a manner like this woman; when we are in search of answers to a dire situation we have to become fearlessly daring.

Is All Sickness the Result of Sin?

There is a school of thought which supports the view that all sickness is a result of sin. While generally speaking this could be correct based on original sin and the nature humanity has inherited from its foreparents, the specific intent is to say that the sick individual has committed sin. Sickness is one of the consequences of the fall of man (Gen 3) that believers and unbelievers alike will continue to experience.

⁹ Isaiah 38:21.

¹⁰ Leviticus 15:25.

When Jesus and his disciples encountered the man who was born blind, the disciples wanted to know whether his condition was a result of sin, so they asked Jesus, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”¹¹ Jesus used this as a teaching moment, pointing out that the reason for this sickness was to demonstrate the power of God. Having said this, he proceeded to heal the blind man by anointing his eyes with clay made out of spittle and then told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

A biblical example of a good man who endured much suffering is Job. God allowed Job, a wealthy, godly man, to endure sickness and to experience tragedy to prove a point to the enemy. The Bible noted, “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”¹²

Satan, in addressing the eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God, asserted that Job was not as perfect as God claimed and that Job’s faithfulness was a result of the blessings he had received from God. Satan then challenged God by telling him if removed the blessings from Job, Job would cease to be as faithful. However, when Job experienced the tragedy of losing his children, his consolation was, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”¹³

¹¹ John 9:2.

¹² Job 1:1.

¹³ Job 1:21.

Job's situation was a long drawn-out process; he naturally became frustrated and could not understand why he was suffering so much when he knew he had done nothing to deserve it. Wanting answers, he began to question God. God finally responded but did not answer Job's questions. Instead, he indirectly rebuked Job. In the final analysis, Job's latter years were greater than the former years; God restored his health and everything he lost in greater measures. This should be a lesson for all of us. Be willing to trust God even when we do not understand.

Harold S. Kushner reminds us that "innocent people do suffer misfortunes in this life . . . they lose their jobs, they get sick, their children suffer or make them suffer. But when it happens, it does not represent God punishing them for something they did wrong. The misfortunes do not come from God at all."¹⁴

There have always been expressed concerns regarding the suffering of good people, but as mentioned earlier, Christians are not exempt from pain, sickness and suffering. However, it becomes a concern especially when an individual who have prayed for and witnessed the healing of so many persons, but when he or she is in need of healing there seem to be no response (at least not what he wants to hear) from God, hence it becomes natural for those suffering or those concerned to ask "why?"

Is Every Sick Individual Healed?

The fact that some people are healed and some are not puts Pentecostals in an interesting position on this matter because healing is one of the characteristics of

¹⁴ Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 44.

Pentecostal spirituality. It is believed that the prayers being offered in faith depend as much on the person(s) offering the prayer as it is on the sick individual, as the sick individual may be in so much pain that he is unable to concentrate clearly. Therefore church leaders must be alert at all times to respond to the call of its members in faith, for “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”¹⁵

Apart from being in the will of God, there are some simple things that can hinder our healing, but we must be willing to acknowledge them and deal with them. In the “Our Father Prayer” it is obvious that if we cannot forgive those who have wronged us, then we cannot expect forgiveness from God, and without forgiveness there can be no healing. James encourages and gives instructions to believers on how to receive their healing:

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.¹⁶

This Scripture gives hope to those who are sick, for it is believed that if the elders pray and anoint him with oil he would be healed. According to the commentary given in the Life Application Bible, oil was both a medicine and a symbol of the Spirit of God.

An example of the use of oil as a medicine is in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). When the Good Samaritan met the man who was badly beaten, he stopped and poured oil in his wound before he took him to a place of safety.

¹⁵ James 5:16b.

¹⁶ James 5:14-16.

An example of the use of the oil as a symbol of the Spirit of God can be found in 1 Sam 16:1-13 in the anointing of King David. Samuel went to Jesse's house to anoint the next king, but the oil did not flow until David was brought before Samuel. "Thus oil can represent both the medical and the spiritual spheres of life. Christians should not separate the physical and the spiritual—Jesus Christ is Lord over both the body and the spirit."¹⁷ Many times as Christians we try to separate the physical from the spiritual, but it must be remembered that Jesus is Lord over both the body and the spirit.

It seems possible then that we can hinder our healing because of lack of forgiveness, which can lead to bitterness in one's heart and cause sickness. "Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness but confessing our sins to one another has an important place in the life of the church."¹⁸ Also, lack of faith can lead to doubt, and if one doubts that God can heal, then the person might not be healed. Too many times persons are busy trying to get healed physically without realizing that it is a spiritual matter. When they do not experience their healing, disappointment sets in and they begin to exhibit anger, not only with themselves but also toward God.

People by nature always seem to think that they must have an answer for everything; however, from all indications, no one seems to know exactly what represented Paul's "thorn." There are speculations with regards to Paul's thorn in the flesh; however, whatever the condition, God refused to remove it, for he had plans to

¹⁷ *Life Application Bible*, King James Version, "Notes, James 5:14" (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2674.

¹⁸ *Life Application Bible*, King James Version, "Notes, James 5:16," 2674.

demonstrate his power in Paul's life. Paul's reasoning was that this thorn was meant to keep him humble. He said, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."¹⁹ When other individuals can see God's power at work in people's lives, it will help to strengthen them and serve as a means of encouragement. This can be seen in Paul's words of commendation to the saints in the Galatians church for their love and concern for him. He said to them,

Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.²⁰

From this passage of Scripture, it would appear that Paul might have been experiencing problems with his eyes; however, whatever the situation, God consoles the apostle with these words: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."²¹ Paul's response shows his acceptance of his physical weakness and affirms his strength in Christ: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."²²

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 12:7.

²⁰ Galatians 4:13-15.

²¹ 2 Corinthians 12:9a.

²² 2 Corinthians 12: 9b.

This is a powerful lesson to those who may not receive their healing. Even if they have asked as many times as Paul did, they must remember that in such circumstances we must depend on God and not on ourselves. Here is a man of God who traveled to many places spreading the gospel, healing the sick, and establishing churches as he went along, and he is now sick, perhaps in pain, and still has not experienced healing. What is interesting to mention here is that when Paul was shipwrecked on Melita, he was bitten by a poisonous snake and should have died, but he shook off the snake in the fire and continued on his mission. He then healed the father of Publius and many others who came to be healed. Later in his ministry, as he sent greetings to his fellow laborers, Aquilla and Priscilla, he wrote, “Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”²³

Imagine the pain of a mother who escaped from a great earthquake but whose five-year old daughter perished under the rubble because rescue was difficult to impossible. Here is a mother who could hear the cries for help from her daughter and listened as the cries grew fainter and fainter and the child died.

What message does the Bible provide for addressing the mystery of suffering? In particular, how does a Pentecostal correlate belief in a God who intervenes when people pray, with the evidence that he does not always choose to intervene, even in the circumstances of good people who suffer?²⁴

Menzies’s response to his questions above is that an important characteristic of the modern Pentecostal movement has been the belief and understanding that believers should expect divine intervention for physical illness when they pray. He stresses the

²³ 2 Timothy 4:20.

²⁴ William W. Menzies, *The Spirit and Spirituality* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 141.

point that the mystery, however, is that not all sick people are healed when prayers are offered.

Hebrews 11 is seen as faith's Hall of Fame. These men and women of great faith in God experienced great victories, including Rahab the harlot. However, there were many who had faith but suffered and died cruelly as martyrs. As believers, our victories are in God's hand and will be directly related to the purpose God has for our lives. Faith in God will not guarantee a life free from trials, suffering, and pain. On the contrary, there may be periods of testing, the purpose for which we may never understand. When faced with suffering and pain, many Christians feel that somehow God has forgotten them, but we must remember that we live in an evil world where pain and suffering is a reality. But we serve a God who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and hence the apostle Peter instructs us to "cast our care upon him; for he cares for us."²⁵

While many believe that finding answers to why some Christians are not healed is very difficult, and that even to attempt to do so may be difficult for human minds to comprehend, Paul writes in the epistle to the Romans, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."²⁶ If God loves us enough to die for us when we were not deserving of it, then as believers, we must have the confidence to trust him wholly.

One of the things that must always be very clear in our minds is that God does not cause suffering and sickness; rather, he can allow certain things to happen, as he did

²⁵ 1 Peter 5:7.

²⁶ Romans 5:8-9.

with Job. God gave Satan permission to do anything he wanted to do to Job with the exception of taking his life (Job 2:6) According to Scripture, even though Job did not understand why God would allow this to happen to him, after receiving news of the death of all his children, Job remained faithful unto God. He was able to love God for who he is and not for what he gives. Satan was adamant about getting Job to sin against God and refused to give up. He caused boils and sores to break out over Job's entire body. It was so painful that Job sat in the pile of ash and scraped himself with a potsherd (Job 2:8). Through all this, we are told that Job did not sin against God, and even though, as can be imagined, he had some questions, he continued to hold on to his integrity. Thus he was able to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him."²⁷

There are many things that we do not understand, but we must have faith in God to know that he has a purpose for everything. So when we think of divine/faith healing, remember that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."²⁸ Understanding this may be hard, but recognizing the fact that even when our Savior hung on the cross, a man who knew no sin, a man who was full of faith, he understood his mission. The prophet Isaiah records,

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet

²⁷ Job 13:15.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:13.

we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.²⁹

Although these words were prophesied concerning Jesus and Jesus knew what his mission was about, the Bible also tells us that as he hung on the cross and the weight of the sins of the world separated him from his Father spiritually, what he spoke about in the Garden of Gethsemane became a reality: accepting the cup of suffering. It is written, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”³⁰

About the above, a commentator notes that “the physical agony was horrible, but even worse was the period of spiritual separation from God. Jesus suffered double death, so that we would never have to experience eternal separation from God.”³¹ It is therefore understandable when sick individuals are experiencing unbearable pain and there seems to be no end to the hurt, they would question God. It is also understandable when and why family members want answers from God.

It cannot be denied that authentic healing is taking place today; it is also a reality that many who are sick are not healed. However, this may not be entirely correct; hence, I would suggest that rather than speculating, trust God and leave the reasoning

²⁹ Isaiah 53:3-7.

³⁰ Matthew 27:46.

³¹ *Life Application Study Bible*, King James Version, footnotes, James 5:14 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2007), 1400.

to the omniscient God. Therefore, when faith fails to secure healing, it is important to allow one's faith to help in understanding that God is in control--hence the importance of knowing the Word of God. John states, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."³² There are times when we do not receive what we have asked God for in prayer, but that does not mean that he has not answered our prayers. Many times when I reflect on situations in my life, I thank God for not answering my prayer the way I anticipated. It can therefore be reasoned whether this same principle is true for healing.

Long before Jesus came to the world to redeem humankind from the misery of spiritual and physical sicknesses, the prophet, writing of his mission, said, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."³³

It is interesting to note that another prophecy concerning Jesus' purpose for coming into the world, which includes that of healing, is found in Isa 61:1-3, the fulfillment of which was penned by Luke, who records the following words of Jesus: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."³⁴ This took place as Jesus worshipped in the synagogue on a Sabbath day, as he was accustomed to, and read from the Old

³² 1 John 5:14.

³³ Isaiah 53:5.

³⁴ Luke 4:18-19.

Testament Scripture. As he returned the book to the minister, he boldly announced, “Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”³⁵ He was able to make this declaration, for he knew the purpose for which he came into the world; his ministry focused on teaching God’s Word, preaching repentance, and healing the sick.

Many individuals and organizations are very skeptical about divine healing and are quick to dismiss it as a fraud or gimmick. While there are some persons who may be dishonest in their dealings, the reason behind the skepticism could be the inability to find a reasonable explanation for what or how the healing had taken place. When the scribes could not give a reasonable explanation for what Jesus was doing, they said, “He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.”³⁶ There were misunderstanding, misjudgment, and confusion during Jesus’ earthly ministry; therefore, we should not be surprised if we experience the same today.

The impact of Divine/Faith Healing in the Bible (Old and New Testaments)

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, the reaction to divine healing was one which brought glory to God, strength to the individual who was healed, and belief on the part of many witnesses as a result. It is natural that this phenomenon would provoke much curiosity, because divine healing is something that cannot be explained by anyone, not even those who were healed.

Obedience plays a pivotal role in experiencing healing. When Moses was in the wilderness with the children of Israel, the people began to complain about everything;

³⁵ Luke 4:21.

³⁶ Mark 3:22.

they complained against Moses, and they complained against God. They complained about lack of water, God provided the water, then they complained that the water was bitter, and God fixed that problem. They had other complaints. They complained about not having food; God provided bread for them. Then they complained that they were tired of the bread and needed some meat, which God also provided for them, with the instruction that they should collect only enough for each day. They openly defied God's command by collecting enough for the following day, an action which proved fateful, for all of the extra food they had collected spoiled. God got tired of their continuous complaints and sent poisonous snakes which bit them, and many of them died.

Psalm 78 tells us that the children of Israel complained because they were not faithful, they were disobedient to God, and they had forgotten the miracles that God had performed on their behalf. There are many Christians today who, rather than being thankful, would rather complain about everything.

After the children of Israel confessed to Moses and Moses prayed and asked the Lord to take away the snakes, God responded to Moses' prayer and said to him, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."³⁷

The Israelites did not understand the full meaning of this act of obedience, but Jesus explained that just as the children of Israel were healed from their sickness by

³⁷ Numbers 21:8, 9.

looking at the snake on the pole, so believers today can be healed from sickness if they trust in God. The New Testament confirms, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”³⁸

Obedience plays a major role in receiving one’s healing. There may be times when God may remind us of a need to forgive others or may ask us to do something that we may not quite understand, but this is when we need the faith to trust God. There was no power in the brass serpent; the power was first in the act of repentance and in the obedience of the people to look at the snake in faith. With reference to the problem and setting of this thesis-project, could it be then that persons are forfeiting their healing because of disobedience?

Another miracle in the Old Testament which involved obedience was the healing of Naaman, the leper. Leprosy was an incurable disease that was extremely contagious. When a servant girl heard of Naaman’s illness, she told her mistress about the prophet Elisha who could heal him. At first Naaman was stubborn, but he eventually obeyed the prophet and was instantly healed. As a result of the persistence of the slave girl, Naaman was healed. Obedience to God begins with humility; it does not matter what our status in society may be. Believers must learn to have faith in God even when he uses unconventional methods to heal us. In pointing out the impact of this healing, Scripture reveals, “And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and

³⁸ John 3:14-15.

came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.”³⁹

Naaman wanted to offer something tangible to the prophet, but the prophet refused, for that was not the purpose of the healing. While to Naaman this gesture might have been an act of thankfulness, leaders must be careful, for there are always persons who are looking for ways and means to accuse one of ulterior motives. No one and no amount of money or wealth can pay for divine healing. When you go to a doctor, you receive a bill for your visit which includes the doctor’s time and skills, but divine healing was paid for by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

An example of a New Testament reaction to divine healing is the man who was born blind. When he was asked what happened to him, he could not describe it. All he knew was that a man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed his eyes, and said to him, “Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.”⁴⁰ The reaction here was that the neighbors were shocked and wondered whether this was the same blind man. The Pharisees doubted because they thought it was impossible for a man who was born blind to receive healing, so they called his parents to confirm that this was indeed so. Some went as far as saying that Jesus was not of God because he violated Sabbath laws, while others argued that how can a man who is a sinner perform miracles?

³⁹ 2 Kings 5:15.

⁴⁰ John 9:11.

Conclusion

God can and is willing to restore health to those who are sick, because he is the compassionate physician. Just as he healed during his earthly ministry, so he can do the same now. We must trust him with the final word; the believer has the assurance of faith knowing that if God makes a promise, he will keep it. People need to know that through faith in God, they can be healed by the power of God. “They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”⁴¹ This does not mean that believers should intentionally, for example, take up a poisonous snake or knowingly drink poisonous substance to see what will happen; God should not be foolishly put to the test.

⁴¹ Mark 16:8.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

The context of my study is The Bahamas, an archipelagic nation; hence it required sampling from as many of the islands as possible to get a representative view of the entire nation. This meant that consideration had to be given to a cross section of the nation, taking into consideration variances such as demographics, age, social status, economical status, and educational status, including culture, traditions, and experiences, for it is possible that views may vary from one island to the next.

While I would have seen what the literature had to say about divine healing generally, and examined the biblical and theological perspectives, it was necessary to see what the church in the Bahamas had to say about divine healing in this era. The purpose was to determine the overall view of participants, but specifically, to see whether gender, age, or length of time being a member in the church would have made any significant difference among the views of respondents to the various questions.

Choice of Survey Instrument

Because of the geographical limitations and nature of this project, it was necessary to conduct a survey using an instrument that was proven to be efficient and that would glean information that was not available in books and other sources. Choosing the right survey instrument was important. It would determine the type,

quantity, and quality of data that can be collected. After examining the possible types of survey instruments as outlined in Dr. Bryan Auday's course on research methodology, I decided that a questionnaire would be the best instrument for this study. While designing the questionnaire it was important to ensure that it was properly constructed with the kind of presentation that would attract participants so they would want to read more to see what it is all about.

According to Dr. Auday, questionnaires are efficient, economical, and capable of collecting a large amount of data in a relatively brief period of time, yielding data that are easy to tabulate and score. These scores can then be translated into numbers which make it rather straightforward to analyze and get results. Also, questionnaires do not use many open-ended questions that produce narrative or qualitative data (which can be more challenging to work with).

Additionally, if the survey requires the collection of sensitive information, the questionnaire trumps again; participants are more comfortable working with the paper than having to give answers to sensitive questions being asked by someone. With the questionnaire, they also have time to think through the questions, without appearing inept; hence they will be more inclined to write honest responses, being aware of the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the questionnaire (Research Methodology—Sakai).

Participants for the Survey

In order to get a true representation of the views of the churches in the Bahamas, it was necessary to collect data from a cross section of the islands using samples from the smaller as well as the larger islands.

The majority of persons who participated in this survey are not computer literate; hence, Survey Monkey or any other form of electronic survey instrument which requires downloading, completing, and submitting online would have been futile. To be successful in collecting this data, I had to do it the old-fashioned way: hard copy. While it might have required more time and effort on my part, this was the only route I felt would produce adequate and timely collection of data.

Pastors consented to have the survey done on Wednesday nights after Bible studies or on Sundays after worship services, and they willingly offered their assistance. Members were informed before the survey process that persons eighteen years or older who wished to participate in the survey would need to remain behind after the event (on an agreed date and time); hence, they volunteered to participate in the survey by the fact that they were willing to stay behind. They were also informed in advance that their responses would be held in the strictest confidence and will remain anonymous. This was also stressed in the letter to them. (For Letter to Participants, please see Appendix E and the Questionnaire in Appendix F.)

There were 305 copies of the questionnaire distributed to 19 churches, and 271 were returned, which represents a return rate of 89%.

Results/Findings

The questionnaire consisted of eighteen items. The first three items dealt with personal demographics; eleven of the other fifteen items were structured multiple-choice questions using the Likert scale format, and three were open-ended questions.

The three narrative/descriptive items on the questionnaire were follow-up items:

- Item #10 was a follow-up to Item #9, in which participants were asked to give reason/s for their response to item #9, which was whether this generation has an appreciation for divine healing like the previous generation/s. Of the participants, 229 or 84.5% of the 271 responded, while 42 or 15.5% did not.
- In a follow-up item, participants were asked to give reason/s for their response to item # 11: Divine healing is a fake; it is not real. For this question, 219 or 80% responded, while 52 or 20% did not.
- For the final narrative/descriptive item, which was a follow-up to the previous item #14 which asks if the participant or anyone he/she knew have ever been miraculously healed through prayer and faith in God, 183 or 67.5% of the participants shared their experiences, while 88 or 32.5% did not.

With the aid of frequency tables, bar charts, and T-tests, the analysis of all of the structured items on the questionnaire were completed. The following is a brief description of the data presentation tools.

1. A frequency table is a way of tabulating data in which the independent variable (that is, what one is measuring, such as height or length) is listed in

the left-hand column. The frequency, which is the number of times the independent variable occurs, goes in the right-hand column.¹

2. A bar graph (also called bar chart) is a graphical display of data using bars of different heights. A bar chart is a style of chart used by some technical analysts on which the top of the vertical line indicates the highest and the bottom represents the lowest of whatever it is that one is measuring.²
3. A T-test is an analysis of two populations' means through the use of statistical examination; a T-test with two samples is commonly used with small sample sizes, testing the difference between the samples when the variances of two normal distributions are not known. A T-test looks at the T-statistic, the T-distribution, and degrees of freedom to determine the probability of difference between populations; the test statistic in the test is known as the T-statistic.³

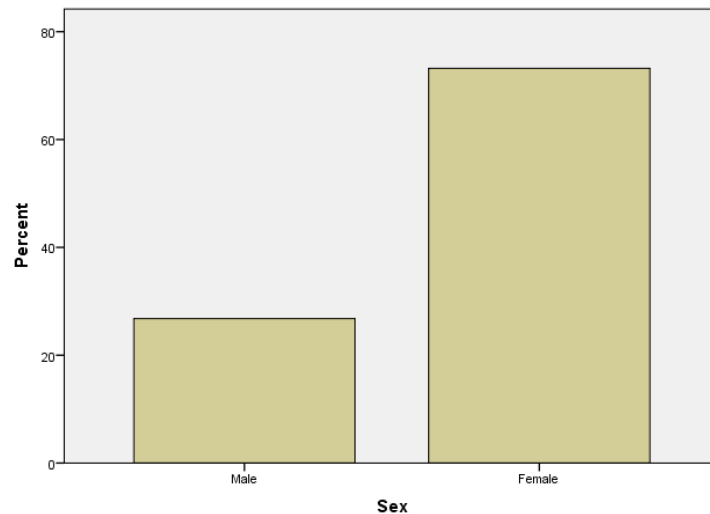
The bar graphs are visual representations of the statistical information as outlined in the frequency tables.

¹ "Frequency and Frequency Tables," accessed November 29, 2017, http://www.mathsteacher.com.au/year8/ch17_stat/03_freq/freq.htm.

² "Bar Chart," Investopedia, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/barchart.asp>.

³ "T-Test," Investopedia, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/t-test>.

Figure 1: Sex



Data analysis reveals that out of the 271 participants, 71 or 26.8% were males and 194 or 73.2% were females; this is in keeping with the general demographics of church membership. To determine whether there were any significant differences between these two populations necessitated the use of the T-test analysis tool.

In examining the T-test group statistics, the mean shows that there were no significant differences in the responses of the male and female participants. However, the males demonstrated a stronger agreement than the females for the following items:

- Some people are not healed due of lack of faith.

The number of males responding to this item was 71 and the number of females was 189. This resulted in a mean of 1.72 males and 2.02 females, with a standard deviation of .831 males and 1.064 females. It can be concluded statistically that the male respondents had a stronger response in agreement with this statement than the females with a significant difference of .035.

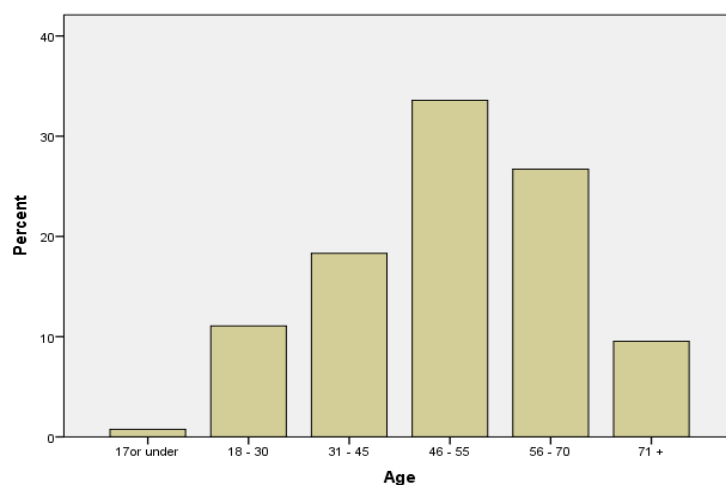
- This generation does not have an appreciation for divine healing like the previous generations.

The number of males responding to this item was 71 and the number of females was 193. This resulted in a mean of 2.00 males and 2.30 females, with a standard deviation of .926 males and 1.007 females. Statistically, it can be concluded that the male respondents had a stronger response in agreement with this statement than the females with a significant difference of .029.

- Divine healing has positively impacted the church.

The number of males responding to this item was 71 and the number of females was 189. This resulted in a mean of 1.59 males and 1.84 females, with a standard deviation of .821 males and .911 females. Therefore, statistically, it can be concluded that the male respondents had a stronger response in agreement for this statement than the females with a significant difference of .049. (See Appendix G, and Appendix H)

Figure 2: Age Range



Data analysis reveals that more persons between the ages of 46 to 55 participated in the survey, which could be seen as the average age of members in the church. An aggregation of participants 46 years of age and older is 183 or 69.8% and those 45 years of age and younger is 79 or 30.2%. There were 9 or 3.3% of the participants who did not respond to this item.

According to the statistics, there is no significant difference between the age groupings, except for the following items.

- Persons can be healed through points of contact such as touching a radio or television, anointing oil, or a prayer cloth.

The number of participants from the younger group (45 and under) responding to this item was 78 with a mean of 1.97, and the number of participants from the older group (46 +) was 180 with a mean of 1.77. This gives a standard deviation of .939 for the younger group and .811 for the older group. Therefore, statistically, it can be concluded that the younger group of respondents had a stronger response in disagreement with this item than the older group, with a significant difference of .081.

- This generation does not have an appreciation for divine healing like the previous generation/s.

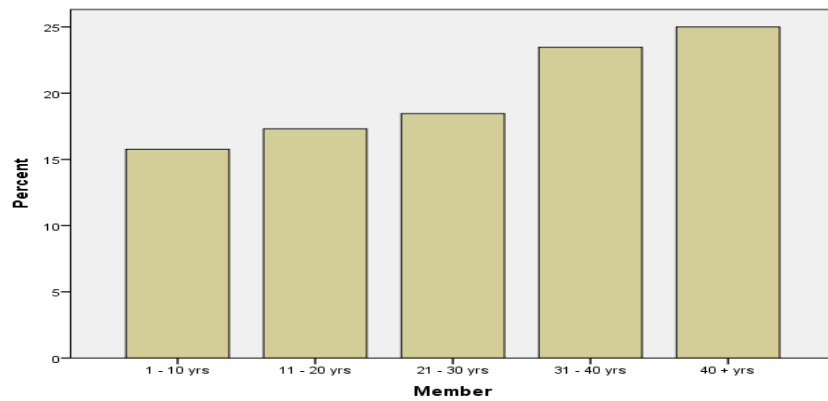
The number of persons in the younger group (45 and under) responding to this item was 78 with a mean of 2.46, and persons from the older group (46 +) was 183 with a mean of 2.13. This resulted in a standard deviation of 1.041 for the younger group and .961 for the older group. Therefore, statistically, it can be concluded that the older respondents

had a stronger response in agreement with this statement than the younger group, with a significant difference of .012. (See Appendix I and Appendix J)

Also, for these same two questions above, the older participants had a more positive view than the younger participants. The narrative data also support the differences in the responses given by the younger group and the older group in the follow-up item in which participants had to give reason/s for their response to the previous item. Participants from the older group felt that the younger generation did not have an appreciation for divine healing because they lack faith and do not spend enough time praying and reading the Bible. They also noted that this generation has money and can afford medicine and medical services, while the previous generations could not because of lack or limited financial resources. Some also said that the younger generation lacks patience; they want instant results.

Participants from the younger generation is of the view that while some of them may not have an appreciation for divine healing, and may not have faith, what they need is to see more manifestation of divine healing in churches, and that there needs to be more teachings on and testimonies of divine healing.

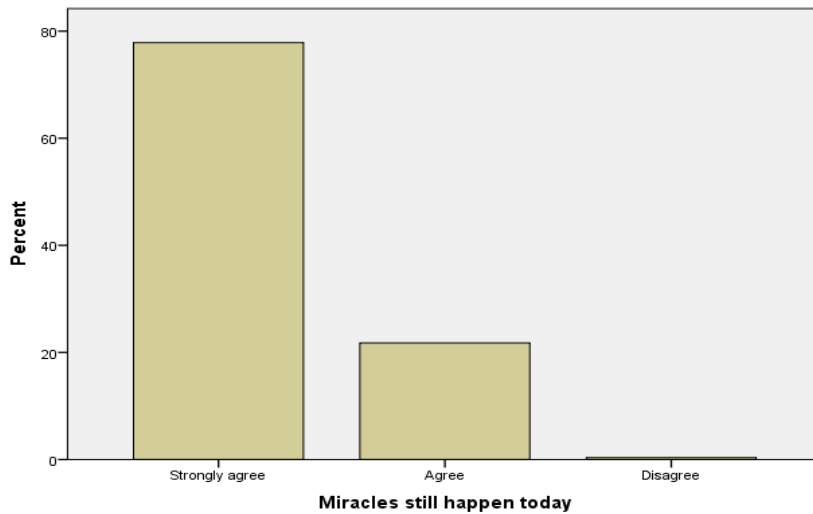
Figure 3: About How Long Have You Been a Member or Follower of the Church of God of Prophecy



Out of a total of 271 participants, there were 260 respondents to this item showing the number of years as member of the church, which revealed the following:

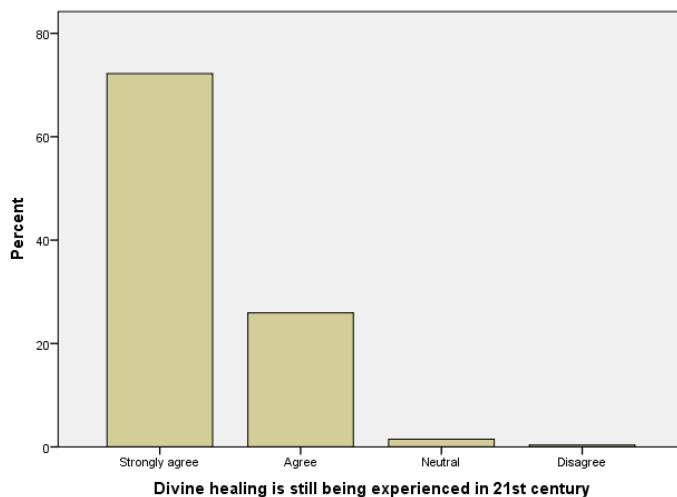
- 41 or 15.8% had membership in the church for 1 to 10 years.
- 45 or 17.3% had a membership in the church for 11 to 20 years.
- 48 or 18.5% had a membership in the church for 21 to 30 years.
- 61 or 23.5% had a membership in the church for 31 to 40 years.
- 65 or 25.0% had a membership in the church for 40+ years.

Figure 4: Miracles Are Still Happening Today



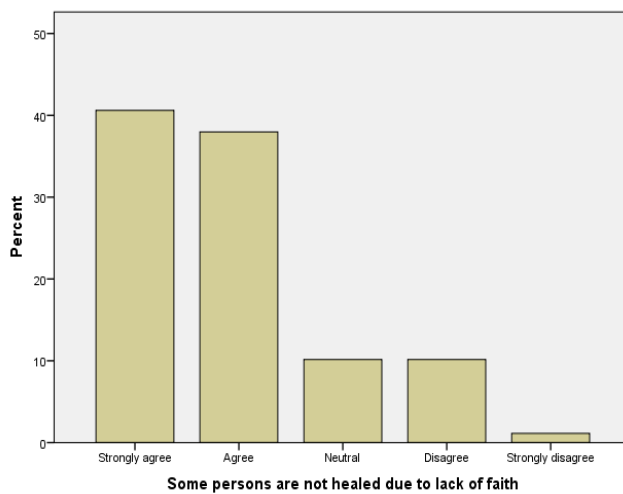
For question #1, Miracles are still happening today, 271 participants responded. Out of the total respondents, 211 or 77.9% gave a strongly agree response, 59 or 21.8% gave a response in agreement, and 1 or .4% of the respondents disagreed. This gives a total of 270 or 99.6 responses overwhelmingly agreeing that miracles are still happening today, and 1 or .4% disagreeing.

Figure 5: Divine Healing Is Still Being Experienced in the Twenty-first Century



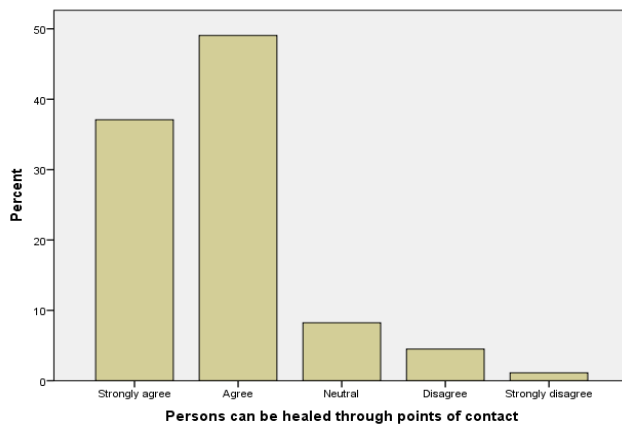
For this question, the following statistics were revealed: out of a total of 270 respondents to the question, 195 or 72.2 % strongly agreed, 70 or 25.9% agreed, 1 or .4 disagreed, and 4 or 1.5 remained neutral.

Figure 6: Some Persons Are Not Healed Because of Lack of Faith



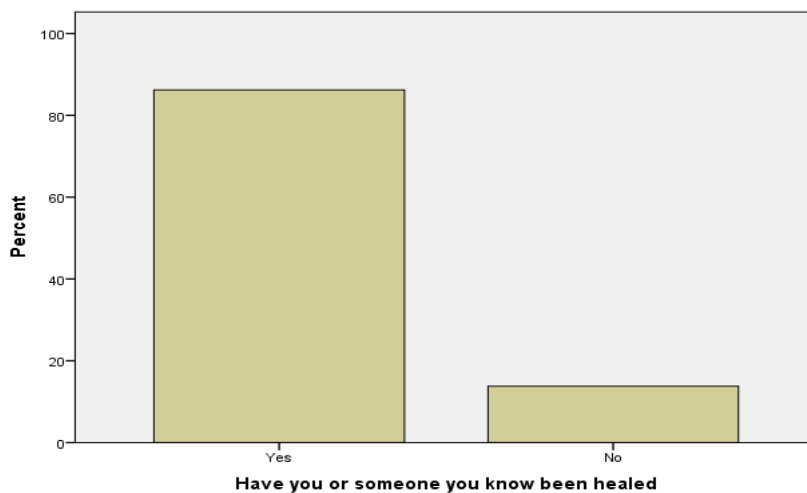
In response to the question, whether some persons are not healed due to lack of faith, 209 or 78.6% of respondents agreed, 30 or 11.3% disagreed, and 27 or 10.2% remained neutral.

Figure 7: Persons Can Be Healed Through Points of Contact Such As Touching a Radio/Television, Being Anointed with Oil, or by Applying a Prayer Cloth



A total of 268 participants responded to this item. Out of the total responses, 230 or 86.1% overwhelmingly agreed that persons can be healed through points of contact, 15 or 5.6% disagreed, while 22 or 8.2% remained neutral.

Figure 8: Have You or Anyone You Know Ever Been Miraculously Healed Through Prayer and Faith in God

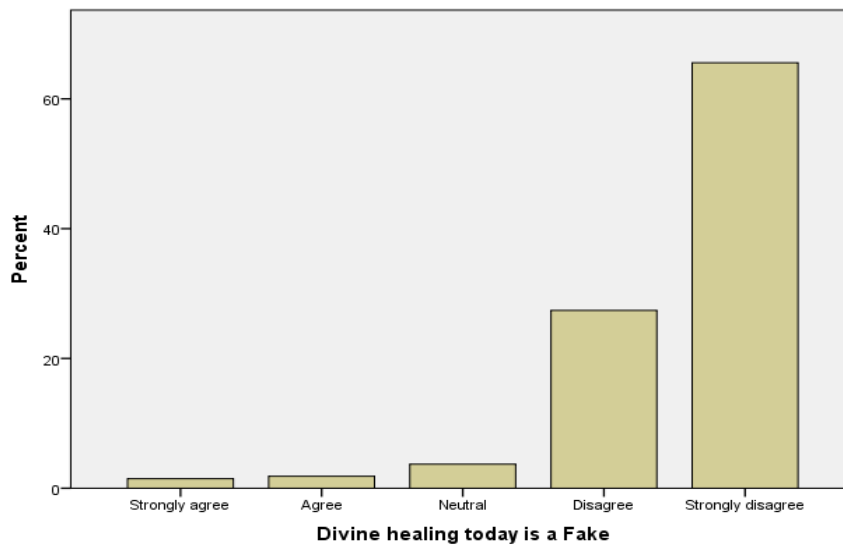


In response to this question, 261 or 100% of the participants overwhelmingly noted that they or someone they knew had experienced divine healing. In the follow-up item, in

which participants were asked to share examples of healing if their response to the previous item was yes, the narrative data show that 183 or 67.5% participants responded. They all shared examples of how they, a child, a significant other, neighbor, church member, cousin, or friend were healed from sicknesses such as cancer, AIDS, broken legs, heart condition, diabetes, leukemia, migraine headache, and meningitis. The common components to these healing were prayer and faith. They claim that their healing was a result of faith in God. In most instances, the church prayed or the individual prayed for himself or herself. The importance of prayers by the church was stressed and commendations were given to the church for their prayers and support.

The following is an example of some of the testimonies given: One of the members in the church was seriously ill in hospital and did not know anyone. The doctors decided that she needed to be airlifted to Miami, Florida, for further help. The cost of this trip and treatment were estimated by the doctors to be around \$250,000.00. The church prayed for her during their morning service, and a few hours later, they received a call informing them that she was healed and did not need to go to Miami. With God, all things are possible. Glory to God!

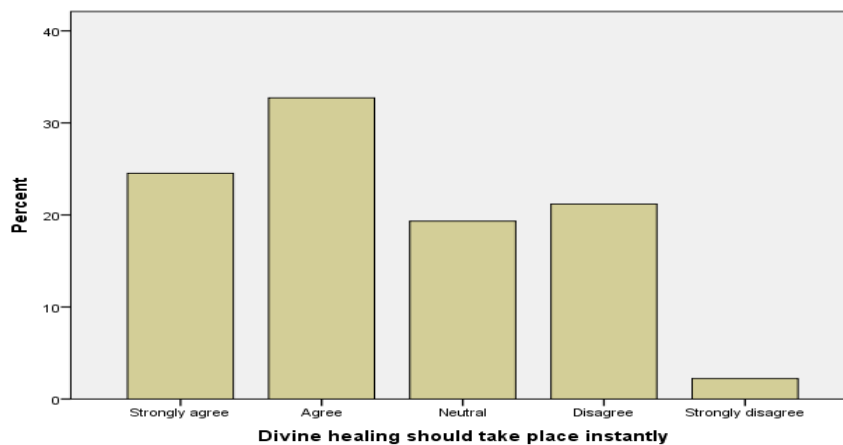
Figure 9: Divine Healing Today Is a Fake; It Is Not Real



This Figure represents responses to the item where participants had to say whether divine healing today is a fake or not; to which 251 or 93% of the participants overwhelmingly disagreed, 9 or 3.4% agreed, and 10 or 3.7% remained neutral. This question received overwhelming responses in the negative. According to the narrative data from the follow-up item where participants needed to give reason/s for their response to the previous question, some of the recurring responses were God is real, God has not changed, he is still a healer, miracles can be experienced through faith and the blood of Jesus Christ, by his stripes we are healed, and he is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. One respondent wrote, “Divine healing is not a fake, just how God healed in the past, he is still doing the same today. We just need faith.” Another said, “Not everything we see on the media may be real, but that does not disqualify the fact that divine healing is real and being experienced.” Another narrative example given is “Divine healing is not fake, but some persons use it to benefit through money and

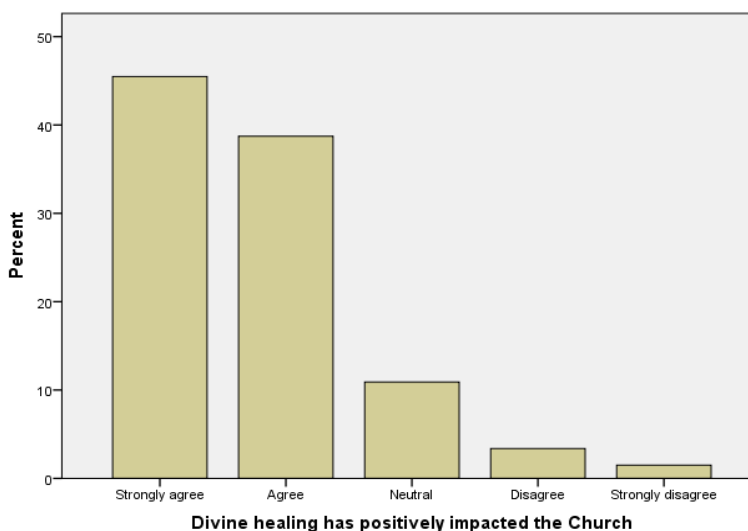
other form of fame.” It was also noted that divine healing may appear to be fake to some people because they do not understand.

Figure 10: Divine Healing Should Take Place Instantly



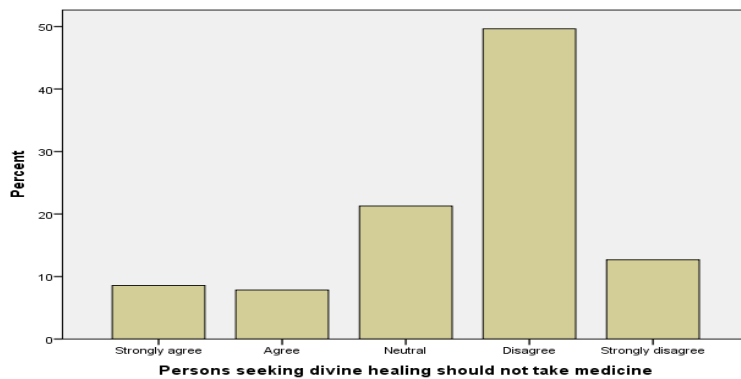
In response to this question, Divine Healing should take place instantly, 154 or 57.2% agreed, 63 or 23.4% disagreed, and 52 or 19.3 % remained neutral.

Figure 11: Divine Healing Has Positively Impacted the Church



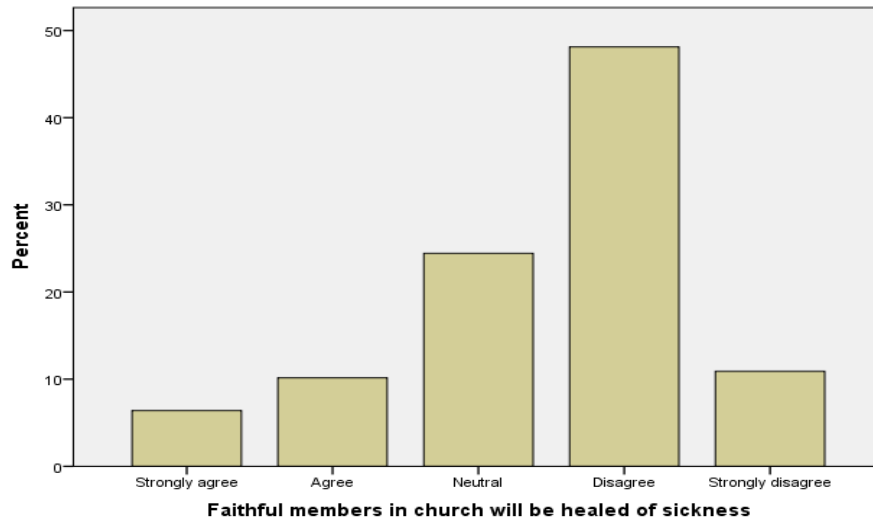
Out of 266 responses to this question, 224 or 84.2% overwhelming agreed that divine healing has positively impacted the church. 13 or 4.9% disagreed, and 29 or 10.9% remained neutral.

Figure 12: Persons Seeking Divine Healing Should NOT Take Medicine Because It Is a Demonstration That They Do Not Have Faith in God



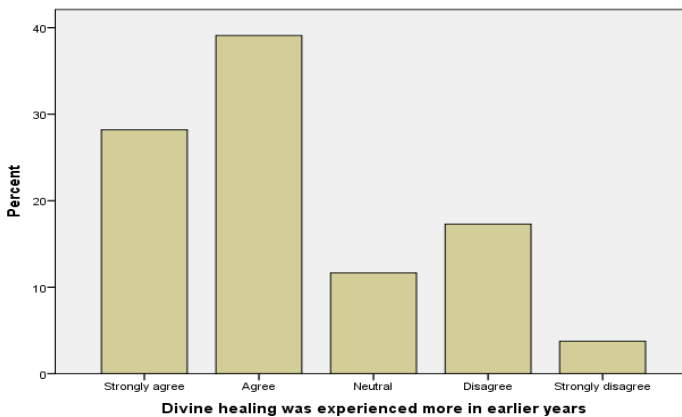
Responding to the question, Persons seeking Divine Healing should not take medicine because it is a demonstration that they do not have faith in God, 44 or 16.2% agreed, 164 or 62.3% disagreed, while 57 or 21.3% remained neutral.

Figure 13: If Faithful Members in the Church Become Ill They Will Definitely Be Healed



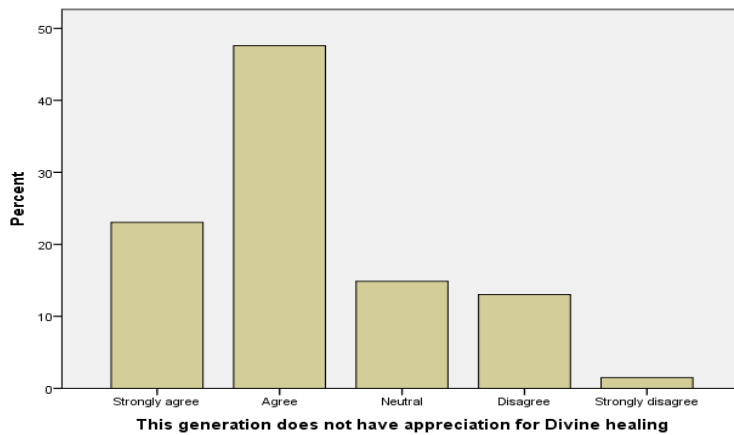
In response to the question that faithful members will be healed of sickness, 44 or 16.6% respondents agreed, 157 or 59% disagreed, and 65 or 24.4% remained neutral.

Figure 14: Divine Healing Was Experienced More in the Earlier Years Than It Is Being Experienced Today



In response to the question referring to the fact that divine healing was experienced more in the earlier days, 179 or 67.3% agreed, 56 or 21.1% disagreed, and 31 or 11.7 remained neutral.

Figure 15: This Generation Does Not Have an Appreciation for Divine healing Like the Previous Generation/s



In response to the question, Does this generation have an appreciation for divine healing, 190 or 70.6% agreed, 39 or 14.5 disagreed, and 40 or 14.9% remained neutral.

The overall view of the statistical analysis shows that participants overwhelming agreed with the following items:

- Miracles are still happening today.
- Divine healing is still being experienced in the twenty-first century.
- Some persons are not healed due to lack of faith.
- Persons can be healed through points of contact such as touching a radio/television, being anointed with oil, or by applying a prayer cloth.
- Divine healing was experienced more in the earlier years.
- This generation does not have an appreciation for divine healing like the previous generations.
- Divine healing has positively impacted the church.
- Have you or someone you know been healed?

Participants overwhelmingly disagreed with the following items:

- Divine healing today is a fake; it is not real.
- Persons seeking divine healing should not take medicine.
- If faithful members in church become ill, they will definitely be healed.

Personal Testimonies

Two males, who are both members of the Church of God of Prophecy, after sharing their testimonies to the congregation in services which were streamed live on the worldwide web, willingly agreed to have their testimonies (with their names attached) included in my thesis-project. After further explaining the seminary's policy with the Institutional Review Board (IRB), with reference to sensitive information about individuals, they willingly submitted their letters of consent. They not only want the world to know that divine healing is still taking place but also wanted others to know how good God has been to them personally.

The first testimony comes from Glen S. Beneby, who is a bishop in the Church of God of Prophecy, and a medical doctor, presently serving as the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the Bahamas. Bishop Beneby gave his testimony on Sunday, August 27, 2017 (see Appendix K).

The second testimony comes from Brother Elvis D. Hanna, who is an attorney at law and serves as director of the Men's Ministry and the treasurer in his local church. His testimony was given on Sunday, November 12, 2017 (see Appendix L).

These testimonies truly had an impact on the members who were present the day they shared their testimonies. The members were all aware of their illnesses and would have been praying for their deliverance. It was a time of rejoicing and giving praise and thanksgiving to God for his miraculous healing.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of divine healing on the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas. This would have necessitated examining areas such as:

- Divine healing: belief and practice of the Church of God of Prophecy.
- Healing by means of points of contacts.
- Divine healing and medicine.
- Gradual and instantaneous healing.
- Is divine healing real?
- Are all sick persons healed?
- Healing in both the Old and New Testaments.

Through research of available texts, it was discovered that divine healing is nothing new; it has been around from Bible times. There are many examples of healings by prophets in the Old Testaments and by Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament. Additionally, there are many examples of divine healing in the early days of the church, internationally and locally, and according to data gleaned from a survey by means of the questionnaire, divine healing is still happening in the church today.

Outcomes and Conclusions

It is obvious from all indications that the forebears of Pentecostalism in general, and indeed the Church of God of Prophecy specifically, possessed strong convictions that divine healing should not be aided by medication of any kind; so strong was this conviction that they were prepared to die rather than take medicine. History reveals that one of the daughters of the first international leader of the Church of God of Prophecy suffered severely before she died, while he, along with family and members of the church, continued to hold on to their faith with fasting and prayers. Also the first indigenous colonial/national overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas died from complications, which according to literature could have been alleviated if he had given permission to be taken to the doctor. Both incidents ended with rejoicing and praises to God, as they acknowledged that it was the will of God and applauded themselves for not giving in to medicine, which they felt would have been a sign of lack of faith in God.

However, the survey revealed that in this regard, the views of church members today are quite the opposite of those of their forebears. Respondents to this item on the questionnaire disagreed overwhelmingly that medicine should not be taken. This is very interesting because according to its Statement of Beliefs and Practices, the Church of God of Prophecy believes that “divine healing is accomplished by the power of God without the aid of medicine or surgical skills.” (See Appendix C, Divine Healing as Stated by the Church of God of Prophecy).

My first inclination was to conclude that the participants in the survey were expressing their disagreement to the teaching of the church; however, upon reflecting on the responses from the narrative data, it may be reasonable to conclude that, as was suggested, it could be as a result of a lack of teaching.

One participant, after experiencing divine healing from a major sickness, was adamant that, from his perception, there is no contradiction, as some may believe, with medicine and divine healing. The participant continued by stating that not only is it amazing how God works, but it is equally difficult to understand the same. People, the participant noted, are challenged by the fact that God can heal a person without doing anything special; however, one participant is of the view that man cannot put limits on God, for doctors can only “treat” an illness, but God does the “healing.”

Speaking on the same topic, Dr. Tom Renfro (guest speaker at a conference at the Church of God of Prophecy, in Nassau, Bahamas, October 14, 2017), pointed out that he has no problem with the use of medicine, and his advice to patients is that rather than wasting time worrying about the side effects of the medication, they should pray for the medication before taking it and ask God to take away any potential side effects and help the medicine to do what it is intended to do. This idea of Dr. Renfro seems reasonable since as believers and non-believers alike, we would normally ask a blessing upon our food before eating; hence it seems logical to do the same for the medication, if one has to take it.

However, from all indications, it can be concluded that unlike the previous generation/s, this generation, as much as they believe in divine healing, is not prepared

to sit back and watch and pray as their loved ones die because of the “no medicine policy” of the church.

From all avenues explored, there are records of divine healing taking place both instantaneously and progressively. However, participants in the survey overwhelmingly agreed that divine healing should take place instantaneously.

While concerns were expressed about this generation and its non-appreciation for divine healing some of the older members agreed, while others joined the younger members by noting that the younger generation lacks teaching, manifestation, and testimonies of divine healing.

In the narrative data, many participants expressed the following:

- The church is not teaching this generation about divine healing.
- People are not testifying in church like they used to.
- Some admitted that they themselves were healed and did not testify.
- Another felt undeserving but believes in prayer as a fundamental of the faith and relinquished everything to God because of the realization that God is able to do miracles.

Therefore, we can conclude that this generation does have an appreciation and could have an even greater appreciation for divine healing, if they are properly taught and exposed to it.

There are some critics who emphatically deny the possibility of divine healing, calling it a fake and pointing to people who have accrued millions of dollars from healings. However, according to the survey analysis, 93% of the respondents

overwhelmingly disagreed that divine healing today is a fake. Many gave examples of their healing or healings that they witnessed or heard about. One of the reasons given as to why the critics are opposed to divine healing is the fact that divine healing is an unexplainable phenomenon, and, because persons cannot understand how it happens, they would rather refer to it as fake rather than seek help in understanding what is happening. There were some who noted that divine healing is real, but that there are some unscrupulous ministers who stage healing to enhance their image. A biblical example is that of Simon the Sorcerer, who wanted to purchase the gift from the apostles that would enable him to lay hands on persons to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. While this incident was in reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, it shows that there are dishonest people who would allow their desire for fame to lead them by whatever means possible to accomplish their goal. I therefore think that writers should be reminded that it is unfair, when writing about fake healing, to place everyone in the same category.

With reference to whether members who are faithful should be healed, there are some folks who are of the opinion that faithful persons should be entitled to special treatment for their faithfulness which includes being healed if they become ill. However, respondents overwhelmingly suggested that faithfulness in the church does not guarantee healing. Speaking from personal experiences, as a believer and having served along with my husband as pastor for nineteen years, I have had the privilege of being with family members at the passing of their loved ones. There were many who accepted the death of their deceased relative as the will of God while others (sometimes, not

necessarily the immediate family) would express their disappointment that healing did not take place. Some in their unwillingness to accept the facts would sometimes blame the death on the doctors' negligence. There would be talks about the many persons that the deceased would have helped to become Christians and those whom he would have prayed for and were healed. This conversation would give the impression that God was obligated to heal the deceased individual. The survey revealed that 59% of the participants disagreed that because someone is a faithful member in the church, that person should be healed from sickness, 16.6% agreed, and 24.4% remained neutral. It would appear that one quarter of the participants were uncertain. There are many persons who are not only faithful members in the church but also possess great faith; they became ill and do not receive divine healing. Persons need to understand that there are other factors involved when considering why some are healed and some are not. We may never grasp the full understanding of this matter; however, we must remember that it is all in the will of God. As we read biblical examples of healing, we realize that there were times when the healer possessed the faith, while the persons who were healed did not. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that faithfulness is no guarantee for healing. This brings us to the question of persons not being healed because of lack of faith. The question was not specific on whether the lack of faith had to do with the sick person or the person praying for the healing, or both. However, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that persons are not being healed due to lack of faith.

In the story of the man who had been at the pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years, Jesus asked him only if he wanted to be healed. The crippled man responded to this question by telling Jesus why he could not get into the pool. Jesus did not ask another question. He then told the man to get up, pick up his bed, and walk.¹ Nothing was said about his faith. In other healing miracles Jesus would tell the sick individual that his or her faith had made them whole. In the case of the crippled man, did Jesus see faith in the man that the man did not know he possessed; was the fact that even though he did not make it to the pool in time, it was faith that kept him trying? As believers, we sometimes want to figure out everything logically or theologically, and at times even physiologically and psychologically, but as we are told in the Holy Word, it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”²

According to the analysis of data collected, it is clear from personal testimonies of healing by individuals that healing is still taking place today and the church is being impacted. Actually, 84.2% of the respondents agreed that divine dealing has positively impacted the church. While it may not receive the same level of publicity as it did in the earlier years and persons healed may not be sharing their testimonies publicly, because they do not see it as being important, one participant who was healed realized that he has a duty to testify of the goodness of God.

In the earlier days of the church, in every service there was a special time set aside for testimonies; therefore persons were excited and came to church with great anticipation to share or to hear of miraculous healing that would have taken place.

¹ John 5:8.

² Zechariah 4:6.

Another point that was noted in the narrative data was that the church today does not teach divine healing like the leaders did in the earlier years; hence the need for pastors to ensure that members are well informed.

It was enlightening to know that divine healing is still taking place in the church today. From the many responses; 86.2% of the respondents stated that they or persons they knew are recipients of divine healing. They also gave examples of such healings.

What is difficult to determine is whether

- 1) There are many healings taking place that are not being reported
- 2) If the healings are not being reported, is it because
 - the healed individuals feel that people might not believe their stories.
 - worship services are not structured to allow the healed persons to share their testimonies.
 - they do not think there is a need to testify because they have not been exposed to testimonies of healing in services or encouraged to give their testimonies.
 - as the narrative data indicated, individuals do not want to appear to be weird or labeled as fabricators.
 - they have spent so much money on doctors and medication that they feel obligated to give the credit to the doctors and the medicine.

Divine healing was the deciding factor for becoming a part of Pentecostalism in the early beginning of the movement. The limited financial resources of persons made it difficult for them to become recipients of medical treatment; hence, when they realized

that healing was available through the church, without a financial cost, they gravitated to this new movement. Divine healing may not be the deciding factor to become a part of the church today because, as was mentioned earlier, unlike in the earlier years, most persons now can afford to pay for the services of a doctor at the government hospitals and clinics and purchase medication that has been made affordable to them.

Additionally, while there may not be regular testimonies of healing, whenever it happens, it has a positive impact on the church. To sit and listen to testimonies of healing in services, one not only senses but also sees the spirit of jubilation, as praises are offered to God for the healing miracle. Further, when testimonies of healings are given during the service, if there are visitors present, they can be impacted and encouraged to return to hear more testimonies. Also, if these visitors or their relatives or friends become ill, they may request the church to pray for them. For instance, there are relatives of members who are not Pentecostals, but if there is a sickness in the family, they rely on the leaders and members from the Church of God of Prophecy to pray for them.

Recommendations

I remember, in my early experiences with the Church of God of Prophecy, services were structured in such a way that no one could come to church after some miraculous encounter with God and not have the opportunity to share their testimony with the congregation. It did not have to be in a church building, nor did it have to be on a Sunday. It could have been on any day of the week, where and when the members of

the church got together for prayers or Bible study. Testimonies were shared and opportunities to pray for the sick, present or absent, were made available. I do not want to sound like everything that the church has left behind need to be brought to fore, but there are some basic practices that we need to always keep before us.

I would therefore like to make the following recommendations to church leaders:

Teaching must be Intentional. I feel that pastors are responsible to ensure that every member of the church is knowledgeable of its teachings. It is an indictment for members not to know, for example, the church's position on divine healing. In membership classes before they are accepted as members in the church, they should be taught the teachings of the church, along with other significant historical information. The importance of teaching or educating persons in the things of God is made plain in the Old Testament in the book of Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."³

Another area for teaching in the church is that church leaders need to ensure that members are aware of the fact that divine healing does not always have to be instantaneous and because it is not done instantaneously, it does not mean that it is not a divine healing. More importantly, I feel that persons need to know that God chooses whatever method he thinks is best for the final outcome of the situation. In this regard, I

³ Hosea 4:6, King James Version.

would like to submit my findings to the international body; more specifically the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee of the Church of God of Prophecy, suggesting that the committee might want to revisit its teaching on divine healing with its 'no medicine' policy and also consider using more inclusive language with reference to spiritual, mental and emotional healing.

Testimonies. In many churches, testimonies of praise or request for prayers seem to have been replaced by praise and worship, which sometimes involves lengthy singing. Occasionally, the praise leader may ask an individual to testify of the goodness of God in his or her life.

I feel that persons should be encouraged by pastors to inform them earlier in the week if they have a testimony of praise that can edify and enlighten the congregation. So, rather than having someone who does not have a specific testimony, it would be more rewarding to use someone who have experienced a miraculous encounter with God, including healing during the week, which can be a blessing to the congregation.

In the earlier days, there were some basic segments of the service that members always looked forward to, such as a time of singing, praying, testifying, and the Word of God, and services were structured for the accommodation. If these things are in place, this generation would hear the testimonies of healing and sometimes witness healing taking place, hence removing the claim that they are not taught or are not exposed to it.

Provide opportunities for healing during services. Members need to be encouraged to not be afraid to ask for prayers if they are sick, and leaders must be available and ready to rally to the call when it is made. Also, the fear of testifying needs

to be eradicated so that others can share in the blessings, for Scripture reminds us that “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”⁴

The apostle James instructs believers to pray if they are afflicted and call for the elders of the church if they are sick.⁵ These are things that members need to be taught and be made to feel comfortable getting involved in the service. From my experience, some members are sick and in hospital and sometimes pastors hear about it after the fact. In the earlier days the church would have been the first to know, but unfortunately, it is not so today. In the New Testament, another admonition on the importance of teaching states, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”⁶

⁴ 2 Timothy 1:7.

⁵ James 5:13-14.

⁶ Matthew 28:20.

APPENDIX A

TESTIMONY OF DIVINE HEALING

God Heals in Ubon, Thailand

I am a Christian in the Church of God of Prophecy in Ubon, Thailand. I was a Christian a long time before, but I didn't know about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I knew only that all Christians must be baptized in water. When I had more time, I learned in the Bible from the Book of Acts about what the disciples were doing at that time. Now I know that before the disciples went to work for God they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit first, so they could work without being afraid, and win a lot of people to the Saviour. This is the result of the Holy Spirit through all of Christ's disciples.

What about this day when we know our God is alive? He can work through all of his people, too. Having learned this, I wanted God to do something for me. God is a Great Physician. I am a part of His love, so I asked him to heal an allergy which I had had in my body about two years.

In Ubon, they have no doctor for this disease. I had to go to Bangkok to find a doctor until a friend of mine could check a doctor for me. I let that doctor take care of me for about two years. I would get some better, but that disease was still in my body. I suffered from this allergy very much. Sometimes I wanted to kill myself, but I knew that would not please God. The medicine would help me for two or three days. After that I still couldn't breathe. I knew I would die soon.

Some members of the Church told me, “You have to depend on God. You cannot do anything by yourself.”

So I prayed to God, and took all my problems and my body to Him. One night a serviceman came to worship God together with us. I let him pray for my allergy. He asked me first, “Do you know God is alive and can do all things? I answered, “Yes,” because the Bible said so. He asked me again to confess any sin, and we knelt and prayed a long time together. Suddenly my allergy was gone from my body. Now I can breathe as well as before.

I praise God, and thank Him even until today because He healed me without the medicine. God is the great Physician. I don’t pay for his blessings with money, but just have faith that God can do anything through His Son.

Tongchai Nigornprom, Ubon, Thailand, *White Wing Messenger* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House), August 5, 1972, 17. This and other testimonies are unedited.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF TESTIMONIES FROM THE *ENCOURAGEMENT*, THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY, BAHAMAS

Testimony

“Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-wards: they cannot be reckoned in order unto thee: If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.” Psalm 40:5. Yes. I can say that God is good to me, what shall I render unto Him for all his benefits towards me. I will offer to Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call upon the name of the Lord.

During the months of January and February I was greatly afflicted, but I thank God for Jesus for He said in His word, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.” Mark 11: 24. The saints of God made special prayers to God for the healing of my body and God did answer their prayers. I praise God for there is healing in the atonement. I want to thank God for his healing power and my desire is to live closer to Him every day of my life, remember me in your prayers.

Miriam Curtis, Exuma

Miriam Curtis, *The Encouragement* (Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, June 1954), 3.

Testimony of Healing by Colleen Hanna, Meadow Street

I was plagued with pains in my chest for a long time. It was on a Saturday morning when I had the pain again and decided to visit the doctor. I took some X-rays - the doctor said that my heart was not shaped right. I had to go back to there on Monday.

It was at this same time that the Out-Reach Team were holding a revival on the Yellow Elder Park. I went there and I requested prayers by the Out-Reach Team that I might be healed by the Almighty God. Before the message was brought forth they prayed for me and: Praise the Lord, he healed!

On Monday I returned to the hospital and had more tests. The doctor revealed to my mother that I was well and there was nothing wrong with my heart.

I truly thank God for my complete healing.

Colleen Hanna, *The Encouragement* (Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, March 1988), 9.

Healed of High Blood Pressure

I am thanking and praising God for healing me of a very high blood pressure, for almost two years. My blood pressure was up to over 240, twice I was kept in hospital and was discharged, in March convention, 1977. I passed through the healing line and my healing right then started. Praise the Lord. Other ailments, heart beat unusually and pain in shoulder. The churches prayed for me in January 7th, 1978, I made up my mind

to pray through to God. He heard and answered me and gave me a miracle. In four weeks time, the pressure dropped down to 140, from 220. I held to the promise of God. (1) with his stripes I am healed. (2) I am the Lord that healeth thee. (3) Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, with the Psalmist. I say Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits and his praises shall continually be in my mouth.

Frank Bodie, from the Carmichael Road Church

Frank Bodie, *The Encouragement* (Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, April 1978), 11.

“A Testimony of Divine Healing”

To God be the glory, great things he has done. Great is the Lord and great is He to be praised for the goodness he has done in my life. If I had a million tongues, I will not be able to thank my God enough, for the many blessings which He had bestowed upon me.

Between the months of November, 1983 and December, 1983 I was told that I needed to have three operations. They were operations which I was told to take urgently. I never told my mother about them, because I did not want her to be upset over my illness. Quickly I remembered the woman with the issue of blood whom Jesus healed. I then began to talk to God. “Jesus you made my body, you know what’s wrong, you are the greatest Physician, why don’t you heal my body right now?”

Do you believe I told Him before it was done “Lord you did heal me”. Praise the Lord, I can now sing with a full and true assurance “Victory in Jesus”. Thank God my

body is healed. The doctors confirmed that nothing is wrong, no operation is needed.

Praise the Lord. I have been healed.

Before I consulted God, I said, if God heal my body I will tell others.

I am a Christian, and a Member of The Church of God of Prophecy in Steventon, Exuma.

Christians let me tell you something when God does something for you, please tell others about it. By so doing you will be lifting Jesus up so that the world may see.

Sister Willamae V. Ferguson, Steventon, Exuma, Bahamas

Willamae V. Ferguson, *Encouragement* (Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, January/February 1984), 4.

APPENDIX C

DIVINE HEALING AS STATED BY THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

God's sovereign grace and mercy, through the atonement of Jesus Christ for all our sins and ultimately for all the consequences of sin, provides for the healing/salvation of our souls as well as our bodies in His work on Calvary. In the tradition of Jesus and His apostles as recorded in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles (Mark 3:1–5; 9–12; 14, 15; Matthew 10:8; Acts 5:12), the Church believes that divine healing is accomplished by the power of God without the aid of medicine or surgical skills (Matthew 8:14–17). While it is clear that God does not always heal instantaneously in response to all prayers for healing (whether of the individual or of someone else praying on behalf of an individual as is seen in (2 Timothy 4:20).

It is also a clear biblical duty of the elders and ministers of the Church to pray for the sick and to visit the sick (James 5:13–18). This text specifically addresses the soul, but the whole person (spirit/soul and body) can be divinely healed by the power of God. The healing of persons in response to faith and prayer (Acts 3:11–16) and by God's special mercy (to spare certain of His servants more sorrow, cf. Philippians 2:25–27) is definitely confirmed in Scripture. We have a duty to continue to pray fervently for the sick, humbly leaving it in God's hands to work His sovereign will.

Church of God of Prophecy, *Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2008), 13, 14.

APPENDIX D

MANY ARE DIVINELY HEALED - 1936

About 8:30, Friday evening, September 11th the might divine healing service with Homer A. Tomlinson in charge began. He had as a main or principal instructor the Rev. Francisco Olazabal. Others assisting in this sacred service were, James Daniel, C. H. Randall, J. R. Smith, Pattie K. Scotton, E. G. Murr, D. R. Holcomb, Randolph Williams, Bell Poole, Lou Lamb, Sallie Clegg, W. I. Deese, F. J. Crowder, Olive B. Smith, L. N. McCoy, Beulah M. Jacobs, B. O. Funderburk, J. O. Hamilton, M. E. Wilson, C. W. Risner, Nell Thomas, Buna Lowman, H. B. Stump. Another group prayed over and anointed hankerchiefs.***

*** A clerk said: “. . . here they come – blind and lame, deformed and nervous, suffering from ailments, but having faith in God An hour has elapsed. The roar of shouts of praise, and prayers for healing ascend, mingled with Hymns . . . Cripples are not using their crutches. Stiff arms and legs are being straightened.”

On past midnight the blessings of healing and salvation went as God moved among His devout followers. The mammoth tabernacle was filled to capacity and the street in front of it, and at the sides were jammed with onlookers and interested people . . . the power of God falling everywhere it seemed. Many were so blessed they would have inspiring testimonies at the sunrise prayer meeting tomorrow morning. This service usually attracted tremendous crowds.

C. T. Davidson, *Upon This Rock, Volume II (1923-1943)* (Cleveland TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press 1974), 568, 569.

APPENDIX E
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant,

My name is **Rovena Ferguson**, a Doctor of Ministry candidate with the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

First of all, let me thank you for consenting to participate in this survey, which will help me to complete my Thesis Project for graduation in May 2018. In order to participate in this survey, you must be **18 years** or older.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE as it is important to treat your response with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity as possible.

This Questionnaire should take you about **10-12 minutes** to complete. By choosing to participate in this survey, you have agreed to volunteer your service. Please be advised that there is no financial compensation for your assistance, but your willingness to participate, and your time and effort expended in doing so is greatly appreciated.

Thank you and I pray God's blessings upon you,

Rovena Ferguson
Rovena Ferguson

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please put a tick in the appropriate box [✓] unless otherwise instructed.

SEX: ☐ Male ☐ Female

AGE RANGE: ☐ 17 or under; ☐ 18 – 30; ☐ 31- 45; ☐ 46 - 55; ☐ 56 - 70; ☐ 71 +

About how long have you been a member or a follower of the Church of God of
Prophecy? ☐ 1 - 10 yrs; ☐ 11 - 20yrs; ☐ 21 - 30yrs; ☐ 31 - 40yrs; ☐ 41 + yrs

1. Miracles are still happening today.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

2. Divine healing is still being experienced in the twenty-first century.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

3. Divine Healing should take place instantly.

☐ Strong Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

4. Some persons are not healed because of a lack of faith.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

5. Persons seeking Divine Healing should NOT take medicine because it is a demonstration that they do not have faith in God.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

6. Persons can be healed through points of contact such as, touching a radio/television, being anointed with oil, or by applying a prayer cloth.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

7. If faithful members in the church become ill, they will definitely be healed.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

8. Divine Healing was experienced more in the earlier years than it is being experienced today.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

9. This generation does not have an appreciation for Divine Healing like the previous generation/s.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

10. Give reason/s for your response to the question (9).

11. Divine healing today is a Fake; it is not real.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

12. Give reason/s for your response to the above question.

13. Divine Healing has positively impacted the church.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

14. Have you or anyone you know ever been miraculously healed through prayer and

faith in God? ☐ Yes ☐ No

15. If your answer to #14 is **YES**, please share an experience.

APPENDIX G

T-TEST GROUP STATISTICS (SEX)

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Miracles still happen today	Male	71	1.23	.421	.050
	Female	194	1.22	.449	.032
Divine healing is still being experienced in the twenty-first century	Male	71	1.25	.438	.052
	Female	193	1.31	.535	.039
Divine healing should take place instantly	Male	71	2.51	1.286	.153
	Female	193	2.41	1.087	.078
Some persons are not healed due to lack of faith	Male	71	1.72	.831	.099
	Female	189	2.02	1.064	.077
Persons seeking divine healing should not take medicine	Male	71	3.56	1.118	.133
	Female	191	3.48	1.085	.079
Persons can be healed through points of contact	Male	71	1.86	.867	.103
	Female	191	1.83	.844	.061
Faithful members in church will be healed of sickness	Male	71	3.46	1.132	.134
	Female	189	3.48	.998	.073
Divine healing was experienced more in earlier years	Male	70	2.13	1.102	.132
	Female	191	2.36	1.183	.086
This generation does not have appreciation for divine healing	Male	71	2.00	.926	.110
	Female	193	2.30	1.007	.072
Divine healing today is a fake	Male	71	4.49	.826	.098
	Female	194	4.56	.768	.055
Divine healing has positively impacted the church	Male	71	1.59	.821	.097
	Female	189	1.84	.911	.066

APPENDIX H

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Miracles still happen today	Equal variances assumed	.145	263	.885
	Equal variances not assumed	.149	132.166	.882
Divine healing is still being experienced in the twenty-first century	Equal variances assumed	-.736	262	.463
	Equal variances not assumed	-.806	151.278	.421
Divine healing should take place instantly	Equal variances assumed	.583	262	.560
	Equal variances not assumed	.540	108.892	.591
Some persons are not healed due to lack of faith	Equal variances assumed	-2.124	258	.035
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.373	160.152	.019
Persons seeking divine healing should not take medicine	Equal variances assumed	.537	260	.591
	Equal variances not assumed	.530	122.103	.597
Persons can be healed through points of contact	Equal variances assumed	.270	260	.787
	Equal variances not assumed	.267	122.417	.790
Faithful members in church will be healed of sickness	Equal variances assumed	-.079	258	.937
	Equal variances not assumed	-.075	113.245	.941
Divine healing was experienced more in earlier years	Equal variances assumed	-1.401	259	.162
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.448	131.037	.150
This generation does not have appreciation for divine healing	Equal variances assumed	-2.196	262	.029
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.283	134.833	.024
Divine healing today is a fake	Equal variances assumed	-.634	263	.527
	Equal variances not assumed	-.613	117.031	.541
Divine healing has positively impacted the Church	Equal variances assumed	-1.979	258	.049
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.075	138.676	.040

APPENDIX I

T-TEST: GROUP STATISTICS (AGE GROUPING)

New age grouping		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Miracles still happen today	45 yrs or younger	79	1.23	.505	.057
	46 yrs or older	183	1.22	.418	.031
Divine healing is still being experienced in the twenty-first century	45 yrs or younger	79	1.33	.571	.064
	46 yrs or older	182	1.29	.491	.036
Divine healing should take place instantly	45 yrs or younger	79	2.49	1.085	.122
	46 yrs or older	181	2.44	1.170	.087
Some persons are not healed due to lack of faith	45 yrs or younger	78	1.87	.958	.109
	46 yrs or older	179	1.97	1.043	.078
Persons seeking divine healing should not take medicine	45 yrs or younger	78	3.51	1.125	.127
	46 yrs or older	181	3.50	1.078	.080
Persons can be healed through points of contact	45 yrs or younger	78	1.97	.939	.106
	46 yrs or older	180	1.77	.811	.060
Faithful members in church will be healed of sickness	45 yrs or younger	78	3.63	.884	.100
	46 yrs or older	179	3.44	1.081	.081
Divine healing was experienced more in earlier years	45 yrs or younger	79	2.34	1.153	.130
	46 yrs or older	179	2.27	1.159	.087
This generation does not have appreciation for divine healing	45 yrs or younger	78	2.46	1.041	.118
	46 yrs or older	183	2.13	.961	.071
Divine healing today is a fake	45 yrs or younger	79	4.56	.655	.074
	46 yrs or older	183	4.54	.817	.060
Divine healing has positively impacted the church	45 yrs or younger	78	1.74	.829	.094
	46 yrs or older	179	1.77	.931	.070

APPENDIX J

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Miracles still happen today	Equal variances assumed	.063	260	.950
	Equal variances not assumed	.059	126.236	.953
Divine healing is still being experienced in the twenty-first century	Equal variances assumed	.545	259	.586
	Equal variances not assumed	.513	130.211	.609
Divine healing should take place instantly	Equal variances assumed	.371	258	.711
	Equal variances not assumed	.382	159.565	.703
Some persons are not healed due to lack of faith	Equal variances assumed	-.685	255	.494
	Equal variances not assumed	-.709	158.772	.480
Persons seeking divine healing should not take medicine	Equal variances assumed	.068	257	.946
	Equal variances not assumed	.067	140.576	.947
Persons can be healed through points of contact	Equal variances assumed	1.751	256	.081
	Equal variances not assumed	1.652	128.952	.101
Faithful members in church will be healed of sickness	Equal variances assumed	1.383	255	.168
	Equal variances not assumed	1.496	177.388	.136
Divine healing was experienced more in earlier years	Equal variances assumed	.471	256	.638
	Equal variances not assumed	.472	149.962	.638
This generation does not have appreciation for divine healing	Equal variances assumed	2.521	259	.012
	Equal variances not assumed	2.441	135.583	.016
Divine healing today is a fake	Equal variances assumed	.154	260	.878
	Equal variances not assumed	.168	182.543	.867
Divine healing has positively impacted the church	Equal variances assumed	-.178	255	.859
	Equal variances not assumed	-.186	163.524	.852

APPENDIX K

TESTIMONY OF HEALING (GLEN BENEBY)

In December 2016, while attending a conference in Grand Bahama, I fell unconscious and had to be flown back to Nassau. After numerous tests, the doctors were unable to give a conclusive report; meanwhile, I was getting worse. Because of my attack with brain cancer more than twenty years ago, the doctors were afraid that there might have been a re-occurrence; hence they were focused in that area. Six months later my condition had deteriorated rapidly to the point where my movement, communication, and memory were badly affected and everyone thought that death was imminent. The decision was made by my senior colleagues to have me flown to the Brain Centre at University of Miami to see the neurologist. Meanwhile, prayers were being offered for me by my family and the church.

I had to undergo more tests, and the diagnosis was that I had arteriovenous fistula, a condition where the blood from the arterial side was leaking over to the veinal side which not only affected the pressure in my brain, but resulted in swelling and structural changes. It was delicate, but important that they release the pressure by removing the blood and stopping the leakage, and by the help of God, they were successful in the seven-hour operation, using veins in my neck to get to the brain. I spent a long time in rehabilitation, learning how to walk, talk, and do other things.

The doctors gave me hope that they could fix the problem. I underwent another operation to have a look at what was done and they discovered 98% of the problem was

solved, but there was an area which was deep in the brain that could not be reached because of its position. While the doctors set out to find a way of entry into the brain for the next series of surgery, I was given a two-month release to allow healing of the first operations.

When I returned to the doctor, with theatre reserved and test being done to determine the exact location of the lesion and point of entry, the lesion could not be found. The doctor admitted that he had never experienced anything like it before and said, "Everybody likes to take credit for what God does, but when God steps in, I am careful to give him the credit that is due him." I was discharged and because of medical policy, certain precaution was put in place, for me to return in six months' time before I can be officially released. On my return home, I felt it my responsibility to share my testimony with the church who were constant in prayer for me, so that they can have a deeper appreciation and faith in God.

This intervention by God has impacted my colleagues, who never expected to see me alive again, and even if I had survived, they never expected be to return to work. Many individuals who experienced this kind of illness and survived were left with some physical or physiological disabilities. I feel so unworthy; I will continue to share this testimony whenever I have the opportunity. All the praise is due to our God.

Bishop Dr. Glen S. Beneby
Church of God of Prophecy, Nassau, Bahamas
27 August 2017

APPENDIX L

TESTIMONY OF HEALING (ELVIS HANNA)

Let me begin by saying that I come from a cancer-prone family. My mother, my father, and my oldest sister all died from cancer, before reaching the age that I have now attained. Today, I want to talk about the miraculous powers of God and the goodness of this church – The last time I testified, I told you about my nine-hour operation for the removal of part of my cancerous jaw and the replacement of the prosthetic jaw and how it got infected and had to be removed. I also told you that my doctors at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, told me to come back in October to have the prosthetic jaw put back in place.

In October, I returned to the Mayo Clinic for the replacement of the jaw, but something miraculous happened. I first went to the surgeon who removed the jaw bone. On seeing me, he said, “Mr. Hanna, you are looking good.” He examined my mouth, looked at my notes and the results of the tests and scans; then he said to me, “Mr. Hanna, your face is healed. The twisting of your face has decreased and it appears that your face is returning to normal and from what I see, you do not need the prosthetic jaw anymore.” I then went to the cosmetic surgeon who originally implanted the prosthetic jaw; after examining my face and looking at my notes and the results of the tests, he said, “Mr. Hanna, something has happened. You no longer need the prosthetic jaw; you are OK!” He then advised me that if I wanted to implant the jaw again, I would have to go through the same nine hours of surgery and the face may

become infected again. I then went to the radiation doctor, who told me the same thing. He said, "Go back to Nassau and do not worry about the jaw." I cried and jumped for joy because of the miraculous power of God. Church, we serve a God who still answers prayers and performs miracles. I want to thank Bishop Hulan Hanna and the members of this church for your prayers and support.

A miracle took place in my life. To God be the glory, great things he has done!

Attorney Elvis D. Hanna
Church of God of Prophecy, Nassau,
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